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AROUND THE COASTS OF ARABIA

by

AMEEN RIHANI

AUTHOR OF
'IBN SA'OUD: HIS PEOPLE AND HIS LAND'

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AN ORTHOGRAPHIC NOTE

No English book on Arabia is free from Arabisms, or Arabic words that have no English equivalents ; but there is scarcely a book in which the rule of italicizing foreign words is consistently observed. Some authors italicize words that are already in the dictionary and others write in roman words that are still in a state of transition, as it were, being neither English nor, in their transliteration, Arabic. I have even seen in some books the same word both in italic and in roman on the same page. Which is annoying to the scholar and difficult for the general reader. I have therefore adopted the following rule : If the Arabic word is in the dictionary, as, for instance, mullah, muazen, minaret, it is set in roman type ; if it is not in the dictionary, as, for instance, *zakat*, *gazu*, *mushrekin*, it is set in italic ; and if it is a word representing an organized body or a class, as Bedu, Ikhwan, Ulema, whether it is in the dictionary or not, it is set in roman and capitalized. This rule, besides making the matter clear to the author and the compositor, as well as to the reader, will also indicate the status of these Arabic words, showing those that have ' arrived ' and those that are still struggling for a place in the dictionary.

A. R.

PART I

WITH KING HUSEIN IN THE HIJAZ

AL-HIJAZ

Its Boundaries.—To the north, Aqaba and the frontier of Trans-Jordan ; to the south, Kunfudha on the Red Sea and the mountains of Asir ; to the west, the Red Sea ; and to the east, the desert and Mt. Hadhn.

Its Population.—About 300,000 in the cities and about 500,000 of the Bedu.

Its Area.—About seventy-five thousand square miles.

Its Principal Tribes.—Harb, 'Utaibah, Juhainah, Houaitat, Benu Thaqif, and Benu Sufian.

Its Principal Sherif Families.—Zu 'Aun, Zu Zaid, Al-Hurrath, Zu Hasan, and Qoraish.

Its Principal Cities.—In the interior : Mecca, Al-Medinah, and At-Taief. On the Coast : Jeddah, Yambo', and Al-Wajh.

Its Religious Sects.—Of the Sunnah Muslems : Hanafis and Shafi'is. Of the Shi'ah : Ja'faris and Zaidis. And there are some Christians, beside the European Consuls, in Jeddah.

CHAPTER I

SOUTH OF SUEZ

THEY were loading petroleum, stacking the surplus cargo on the promenade deck of the *Dakhalieh*, when we arrived. The other passenger, a lady going to Tor, did not seem perturbed. For her, inflammability had perhaps lost its charm ; or she was accustomed to a repression hermetically sealed. But for me, there was the possibility of annihilation, particularly because a certain happy climax of life had already been reached. I imagined myself going up in a bonfire East of Suez—it needed but a lighted cigarette to do it—and I enjoyed the extravagant fancy. But, being a reader as well as a writer of books, I had come prepared for everything saving such an end. Civilization was left behind, and all that was antithetic to it I expected to find East of Suez. It were best, however, had I contented myself with the literary conception megaphoned to two worlds by Rudyard Kipling. In any case, there was still a rush-light of romance left, which no disappointment, literary or real, could snuff out.

East of Suez, south of Suez rather, particularly on a February afternoon, when the *Dakhalieh*, with its inflammable cargo, steamed out of the harbour, was full of promise. I deserved all that was coming ; for I had insured myself only against Incredibility and its lame cousin Doubt. My sympathetic mood, which often became a sympathetic vision, was my only pass-card to the heart of Arabia, its people, and its kings. I learned to say *mashallah* and *inshallah*, whether I was listening to a

historical narrative or to a fairy tale (both are too often hopelessly mixed in Arabia), and afterwards, despite the buckram of common sense, included Allah in my judgment. I was a traveller, a pious and believing traveller; and, with all the willingness in the world, I was ready to believe that the Red Sea, for instance, was at one time as red as carmine, and that East of Suez is, even in our day of grace, a moral murk, an abysmal continent. For not only Orientals delight in romancing, be it remembered. You may travel in Arabia with the Critique of Pure Reason in your saddle-bag; but you have to balance it, willy nilly, with the Koran.

The only other passenger on the *Dakhalieh*, the lady going to Tor, knew something about the Koran and the Red Sea. Indeed, although of Celtic origin, she was at home in both. She told me the story of a sea monster once captured near Tor. The strength of forty men was required to pull it out of the water. She saw it and wrote about it to the Royal Society. It had a head like a monkey's, a thorax like a human being's, while the rest of the body was that of a fish. This was neither a mermaid nor a merman, but a mermonkey, unknown, methinks, to the students of celtic folk-lore. She also told me why the Red Sea was called Red; and here too she spoke as an observer with a scientific mind. It was not red once upon a time as the legend goes; it is not red everywhere and at all times; but only in the spawning season and in places where the sea swarms with gold fish, which glisten in the pellucid water and impart to it the colour that gives it its name—Red Sea!

The sundown glow interrupted the folk-lore conversation. Celtic mermaids and gold fish were forgotten as we steamed south between Africa and Asia in what seemed an apotheosis of calm, crowned with chromatic grandeur. Mt. Sinai was partly in shadow; Mt. Ataka opposite to it was in effulgence; while behind us, the canal looked like a green ribbon floating northward, and Suez faded in a

purple haze. The scene was continually shifting and changing. No sooner had the sandhills of Sinai lost the glamour of sundown than the hard contours of Ataka softened in the glow, undulating withal. Gradually again the scene was transposed. Mt. Sinai was resplendent in rose and violet hues, its outline seeming wondrously plastic, while in the west the dark grey and sable of Ataka, set off by a rich cream tinged here and there with gold, made its peaks seem more aggressive as the sun disappeared. It was indeed a masterpiece of atmospheric beauty and colour-contrasts. The ruggedness of Ataka and the delicate splendour of Sinai could not be more appropriately rendered, or more harmoniously composed. Hardly anywhere else in Egypt is the colourful Oriental sky so eloquently expressed. The close proximity of two continents, rising in a supreme effort on either side of the water, must give the sun its cue ; and when it goes down, the interval between two splendours is not long. Soon after darkness the sky is crowded with stars. They had all come out to enjoy like ourselves, it seemed, the warmth and the calm of that February evening. A low sky crowded with stars. It was ' rush-hour ' in heaven !

My fellow traveller spoke of the pilgrims and of the Quarantine at Tor. She has been in the Egyptian service more than twenty years, has seen more of Al-Islam in its pious mood and squalor than any one else of her race east of Suez or west of it, and continued nevertheless to love the Muslems and nurse them with tender care. Not without reason is she called Mother of the Pilgrims. She carries in the pocket of her love the key to health and sanitation. She reads the Koran to better understand her children ; and she continues, for the sake of remembrance, to read the Bible. ' Let them go to Mecca,' she said ; ' it's a splendid spiritual exercise. But they must on their way back make us also a call—at least for a bath.'

The Quarantine Station at Tor, the second best in the world, is, indeed, one of the guide posts of civilization east

of Suez. It is international; but its administration is in the hands of the Egyptian Government. On that sun-baked sandy wilderness, not far from the village proper, it stands out, a town by itself, hygienically conceived and built; its wards and its stores, its clinics and disinfecting rooms, its soda water factory and ice plants—they recall the best in Europe. It can accommodate from two to three thousand pilgrims at a time, the total number for the whole season sometimes rising to forty thousand. The Egyptian pilgrims, returning from Mecca, are first disinfected and then sent into wards for a period of from three to ten days, according to the prevailing health conditions at the time.

No greater service to Al-Islam, to the world, in fact, could be rendered by medical science. Ever since the Tor Quarantine was established, about thirty years ago, Egypt has not had a single cholera epidemic. It is moreover teaching the Muslems sanitation and hygiene. They first balked at the idea of a quarantine, resented the interference with the pilgrimage, and objected strongly to the disinfecting process; but they have gradually reconciled themselves to it, and now they appreciate the incomparable virtues of Tor. They are beginning to even enjoy the stay, and the first thing they ask for, when they arrive, is a bath. There may be something blasphemous in a disinfectant after a pilgrimage to the Holy Places. 'But health and well-being and cleanliness' said the Celtic Mother of the Pilgrims, 'are enjoined by the Prophet.' She knows the Muslem's Book as well as her own.

A quiet, modest, sympathetic soul, and not without a warmth of feeling, was my companion of an evening; she had also a sense of the divine, which her silence expressed. I could not help thinking that, like the local deities of old, she had imbibed the spirit of the place. From Suez to Tor and from Tor to Suez is a pilgrimage in itself, chastening, uplifting. For one thing, there are no loud voices on the Red Sea, neither in the sky, nor on the water, nor upon the hills on either side of the Gulf of Suez: no overtones

in the coloration, no dogmatism, as it were, in the forms, no harsh outcries in the waves. Everything seems to contribute to the apotheosis of tender variability.

In the morning, at sunrise, the opposite coasts are a pageant of peaks and domes of a texture not unlike the dunes of the Nufoud ; they seem so brittle on the African side that they would crumble under a gust of wind ; while the play of light and shade on the Sinai slopes, set off by a strip of pinkish haze above, and another of white sand looking like a mirage at the base, is like quicksilver and bronze in a frame of fascinating composition. On neither side do the colours betray the least violence. At sunset they are more expressive but not less delicate. The orange that melts into saffron, and the saffron that goes into mauve, and the mauve that rises to the sky to embrace its azure limpidity, all stand in the background of a picturesque chain which becomes bolder in outline as its colour atmosphere becomes more subtle, more ethereal. Even the darkness on the hills is not devoid of a certain glaze, a certain shade of lucidity. It makes them look in their serrated peaks like scalloped black lace hung upside down on a silver thread.

There are also peaks softened by time in the soul of Mother of the Pilgrims ; and there is a silver thread for a few ideals among which she sometimes hangs her humour to dry. Some one was carrying in a crate a few geese to Tor. 'But surely they cannot in Tor afford fresh water for geese,' said I. 'They are Muhammadan geese,' she remarked, "and if they do not like salt water they can have sand." [1] In any case, they'll die among the pilgrims and go to Paradise.' A lucky goose who can find some one to take him to Tor.

Measuring my luck, since I cherished the hope of going even to Mecca, though there be something of the goose-nature at the bottom of such a hope, I considered myself

[1] 'And if you cannot find water, make your ablutions with sand.'—*The Koran.*

the happier traveller. For a moment, however, when saying good-bye to my Celtic friend, a shadow of sadness lingered across my path. What if our humour were the reality, the Koranic truth? Here be a Christian woman doing Al-Islam a noble service; and Al-Islam, in the Paradise to come, gives all its prizes exclusively to the Muslem man. Mother of the Pilgrims, forsooth. I prefer not to dwell further on the subject.

Even the *Dakhalieh's* tea, a murky mixture of something and milk, which was brought early in the morning by the steward in a cup as thick as his thumb, were more welcome than such a Paradise. The sin of the steward was in knocking at my door when I had just fallen asleep. For I had spent most of the night on deck, enjoying the blissfulness of an evening of ineffable calm as compared with the disquieting atmosphere of a Transatlantic ship of tourists. In fact, I was still under the influence of the sunset, and the gibbous moon, with malice or without, came offering me another drink. She brought with her a soft enticing breeze—another intoxication. I surrendered myself. I was in thrall. At daybreak I went down to my cabin, seeking freedom in sleep; but soon after, the steward knocked at the door and, opening it, offered me a cup of tea. I cursed him in Arabic, thinking half-awake that I was on an Atlantic liner. He apologised afterwards—in Arabic! He crushed me.

The *Dakhalieh* is not the best steamer of the Line, but she is better than the general run of Red Sea craft. I was disappointed, because I did not expect anything so good south of Suez—barring the tea—and so clean. What does it matter if she makes but seven knots an hour, and if the skipper is a prurient Greek? From Tor down I was the only saloon passenger, and, in spite of the cargo on the promenade deck, the illusion of a private yacht was irresistible. Allah in his mercy has not forgotten his slave Ameen of Manhattan Island. Allah be praised.

Al-Wajh, the first Arab port of call, is a little village on

THE ARAB FLAG.
Borne by a soldier of the Regular Army of ex-King Husein.

To face page 8.

a sandy coast, with two mosques, twelve policemen in khaki uniform, a school, and an empty prison. This should not be misunderstood. The prison is empty, not because of the want of criminals, but because they are seldom caught. Nevertheless, Al-Wajh breathes an air of prosperity. It makes its own smacks (*sanbooks*), which carry its charcoal, its salt-fish, and its sheep butter to Suez in exchange for wheat and cotton cloth. And north of Al-Wajh, near Dhoba, I was told, are oil fields unexplored. The seepage along the coast runs visibly into the water.

One of the twelve policemen of the town, a youth of twenty, carrying a whip with a silver knob, came on board with the school teacher to supervise the discharge of the cargo. There was, to be sure, a chaos of outcries and a crowding of *sanbooks*; but the only incident that threatened the peace was handled by the young policeman with firmness and decision. A black boy in one of the *sanbooks* picked a quarrel with an Arab; and the two, from the prows of their boats, not far apart, shouted insults at each other. The black was the first to act. He stretched himself forward, lying on his bosom, and clutching at the Arab's arm, dragged him forth and pushed him into the water. The boy struggled amidst the craft, and climbed up again to his own, crying and cursing aloud. The police lad, who witnessed the quarrel and tried to stop it from on deck, adding his own curses to those of the two boys, sent for the black eventually and there and then applied the whip to his bare skin. The boy did not cry. But when he went back to his *sanbook*, he stretched himself on the prow, grinned at his victim, and spat into the water. He then looked up towards Abu-Kirbaj (Father of the Whip) and grinned and spat in the water again.

Just then the camel of Sherif Zaggal was in the air above the black's head, hanging by a rope to the derrick chain; and either out of fright or meanness she staled upon him. Whereupon, the Arab boy chuckled and exclaimed: 'Allah is just!' The Sherif Zaggal, Governor of Al-Wajh,

who was going with us to Jeddah, changed his mind at the last hour and sent his camel instead. The camel, too, might have changed her mind, if she were human. But being a camel, and, although on her first sea voyage, she was indifferent. I paid her a visit on the morning of the following day when she was lying down. A two-year-old, and evidently a thoroughbred. Her manner, if not her features, was a proof of this ; for like an Arab girl she was extremely polite. She got up when she saw me coming and stretched her neck towards me, turning her head to the right and to the left ; turning her cheek rather, for she did not resent being kissed. The camel of Zaggal is gifted also with curiosity ; for often she would stretch her neck above the railing and gaze at the sea and snort. As much as to say, why has the desert changed its colour? And why do the sands roll and tumble over each other as if swept by the simoom? Yet, there is no simoom. She sniffed the air which she seemed to enjoy, and, pursuing her adventure, she made an effort with her neck to reach the water. She was wondering whether it was real sand ; she would find out for herself. Gifted with curiosity, indeed, is Sherif Zaggal's camel, and well bred. I wondered if his subjects were likewise.

The police lad at Al-Wajh was certainly polite, and, in one or two instances, evinced curiosity. He asked me if we had any camels in New York and if we taught the Koran in our schools. I made a straightforward reply, which surprised and shocked him. He was surprised to know that we had no camels, and shocked to hear that we did not know anything about the Koran, and that we seldom really pray.

At noon and at sunset, the third-class passengers, who sleep on the lower deck, spread their little rugs or mats or bits of cloth and turn towards the East to pray ; they really pray—honestly, strenuously, fervently pray. For Allah is there, beyond, as palpable as the ship under their knees, and is all-hearing. Beside him sits Muhammad,

who smiles benignly upon the Faithful. And the huris are there, too, waiting for the Faithful to come. If this were not so, how could they put up with life, how could they endure its hardships and trials, how could they see and not desire the creature comforts that we in our first-class infidelity were enjoying? No, they neither desire nor envy. They have the best God in the world, the best Prophet in the world, and the best Paradise in the world to come. It is yet my lot, and that of the reader who goes all the way with me, to realize that an illusion in a state of detachment can achieve reality, though but for a spell.

Meanwhile, we toy with little things and surrender ourselves to the joy of the moment. Colour is not only a form of enjoyment; it is a necessity as well as a luxury—like love. Indeed, colour is to the soul what air is to the lungs. And what on the Red Sea is more gorgeous than its blue? It is a limpid and lustrous blue, a deep and sensuous blue; a nile blue which is lyrical in the sun; a blue through which, even in the shade, you can see the porpoises many feet under water. Neither the Carribean nor the Eastern Mediterranean in the shadow of the Lebanons can approach it in purity and rare glaze. It is washed, as it were, of all the atmospheric vapours and all the particles that make the waters of Atlantic opaque and dark. It is a filtered blue. The eye drinks of it and never tires, for in pure colour is rest of heart.

In the Gulf of Suez after sunset there still lingered here and there patches of gold which added to the fascination of its blue. The fusion made the slow-rolling little waves look like melted emeralds in gold-lined bowls; and where they did not fuse, they presented a charming design, a lyrical design; a melody of saffron hues moving briskly over the broad cerulean rhythms of the sea.

I asked the Maltese ship doctor if it was the same blue early in winter, and his reply was that he didn't pay much attention to it. He further admitted that he couldn't tell one shade of blue from another. But I heard him at table

speak of the blue mouth of a pretty girl among the Arab passengers. Her lips are tattooed, said the skipper, and then made a remark in Greek, at which the doctor laughed. The wireless operator, a pink-cheeked, clean-shaven youth from Lancashire, who understood the skipper's Greek by inference or by precedent, did not try to conceal his disgust. He later told me that he was going to leave the ship. Once I tried to change the conversation, asking, to my regret, a question about the Maltese language, which is considered to be a conglomeration of Italian, Spanish and Arabic. But the doctor, coming to the rescue, seemed to say, My mother tongue, right or wrong. He told us that Maltese is the ancient Phoenician language and that Arabic is derived from it, that is, from the Maltese! There is always some one on board to spoil a sea voyage.

It is not necessary, however, to make any serious attempt to avoid an unpleasant subject or situation on board a ship which brings you every day to a new port. The change, with a little patience, is inevitable. At Yambo', which is the seaport to Al-Medinah, I met an ancient friend, who is familiar to every one that reads Arabic poetry. For what poet, ancient, medieval or modern, has not drawn upon Mt. Radhwa for a simile or a metaphor? They have made it walk, and ride, and fight battles; but it still stands where it stood of eld, casting its shadow over Yambo' in the morning, and in the afternoon over the plains and hills which separate it from the second Holy City of Al-Islam.

Not only the mountain has not changed, but it harbours a section of the tribe of Juhainah which shares with it the virtue of immutability. These Juhainah Arabs are herdsmen who have lived apart from their fellow tribesmen ever since the days of the Prophet. They go in sheepskins, live in huts up in the mountain summits, and are self-sufficient. Seldom does any of them come down to the plain, and seldom do any other Arabs go up to their heights. Of a

certainty, no traveller, native or European, has ever visited the Juhainahs of Mt. Radhwa; for the Hijaz Government, even to-day, cannot give the necessary protection.

About twenty-four hours after we leave Yambo' we sight the first landmark of the harbour of Jeddah, that is the clearing mark of the navigator, which is Mt. Hamaniyah and the saddle of Mt. Hadda beyond it. Soon after we come to the outer reefs near which the water is of a milky colour caused by the coral sand, which is stirred up by tidal streams or storms. Over these reefs the billows break and form in winter a line which, seen from Jeddah, gives the illusion of a foaming coast in mid-ocean.

From the first reefs to the shore is a body of water, which is only affected by the tide. This is the harbour, and in it are three lines of reefs, with gateways, which are charted minutely for the foreign navigator, giving the direction of the reefs, their size, their form, and their sloping to shoals. All of which the native boatmen know as well as the book of the Red Sea pilot. They even know more, or they have an eye that penetrates the darkness. For they can negotiate the reefs at night without any mishap, zig-zagging around them and going through the gates as if they were lighted with electricity.

We made our way through the hidden gates, meandering to an anchorage about two miles from land. The reef formations were betrayed by the light and dark green colour of the water—crescents of emerald, floating ribbons of saffron, and here and there a white spot indicating a shoal. Another charming passage in the canvas was the ochre over a bed of sand forming a foil to the green, and both balancing a path of deep blue.

Jeddah is a clutter of buildings from two to four stories high stretching about a mile along the coast and inward not more than half a mile. Its minarets and its tall buildings make its sky-line suggestive in parts of that of lower Manhattan. The architecture is pure Arabic, but

not of an elaborate style. The walls are mostly of madrepore plastered on both sides, and a characteristic feature is the woodwork of the *mashrabiyahs* (lattice screens) which stand before the windows. They have also contrived, to combat the summer heat, a sort of bay window, a projection of wood rather, which hangs like a balcony over the street, and can be opened on three sides to the breeze. From a distance the city presents a decent view of prosperity; it is not even lacking in the aspect of grandeur.

Steam launches and *sanbooks* came zigzagging around the reefs to meet us. And lo! my friend Constantine Yanni, who, ten years ago, a beardless youth, was editing a newspaper in Syria and fulminating against the Turks, had become a hirsute Arab and was in the uniform of a Captain of the Hijaz Army. Hola, Constantine! But he had come with other officials of the Hashemite Government, and the greeting, in the name of His Majesty King Husein, was formal, as it should be, and a bit pompous. Later, we slapped each other on the back.

At the Quarantine pier, more officials and more ceremony. The mayor of Jeddah expressed to me the regret of His Majesty, who was in a state of uncertainty about my arrival, caused by my neglect to cable from Suez that I was coming on the *Dakhalieh*. Otherwise he would have come down from Mecca to meet me. 'But he is waiting for a word from us,' said the Collector of Customs, as he entered into the office of the Quarantine Superintendent. And there I got the first big surprise in my travels in Arabia. A telephone in the Holy City of Mecca! The Collector sat at the desk, and, taking up the receiver before him, asked Central, without any preliminary 'helo' or 'elo,' to give him Mecca—Royal Palace. There was no parley and no waiting. The Hashemite Secretariate was informed of the arrival of 'Saiyed' Ameen Rihani, and in half a minute the Collector conveyed to me the Hashemite Secretariate's reply: 'Saiyedna (our Lord) is coming. He will leave Mecca in half an hour.'

CHAPTER II

URBAN ARABS AND BEDU

HORSES and grooms and *bishas* [1] were waiting outside ; and when we got into the saddles, the *bishās* walked ahead of us, their guns carried butt rearward on their shoulders. They wore short brown smocks, cartridge belts, black *ighals* over red headkerchiefs, and were barefoot. The grooms in white smocks and blue sashes carrying bamboo sticks, walked alongside. A crowd of people had collected in front of the Quarantine Building, but they did not follow.

As we passed by the city gate the Mayor excused himself, saying : ' I go to the noon prayer.' We proceeded to the *madhif* (guest-house), a two-storey building, in front of which is a parched-up garden and two drooping tamarisk saplings ; and going up a stairway covered with mats, we came to a vestibule which led to three rooms, a dining room and bedroom right and left, and a reception hall, the length of the building, in front. The walls are practically windows, connected by three or four feet of masonry, commanding a view of the sea to the west and the lagoon to the north ; and in each window, the lower half of which is fitted with lattice, the upper half with blinds, is a sort of divan about a foot high and three feet deep, spread with carpets. The floor was covered with one large Tabriz rug, and all around were rush-bottomed chairs, a few upholstered armchairs, and two sofas on opposite sides of

[1] Soldiers of the King's Guard, originally from Bisha, south-east of At-Taief.

the room. The oval marble table in the centre was another incongruity, and in one of the windows was the telephone.

About an hour after we entered the house, the telephone rang and the servant who answered it announced that His Majesty had arrived at Hadda, which is half-way between Jeddah and Mecca. Another hour, and an ebony black soldier in blue kirtle and red head-dress entered the room, saluted German-fashion, and said : 'The motor car of the King has entered the city gate.' So we all went down and walked over to the Palace, which is but a few steps from the guest-house. A multitude of robed and turbaned citizens, sherifs, sheikhs, saiyeds, and military officers in khaki and *ighals*, coming from every direction, gathered in front of the Palace. We were standing on the steps when the car arrived.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was the first to step out, was followed by two other officials ; the Ameer Zeid then preceded his father, a man of short stature in a green *jubbah* and a headkerchief and *ighal* of cream-coloured silk. Thus on the 25th of February, 1922, my feet first stepped on Arab soil and my eyes first beheld the most famous of the Kings of Arabia, the only Arab King, in fact, that was then known to Europe and America.

I came from New York with a lingering uncertainty in my heart, caused by the saturnine countenance of His Majesty as revealed in the picture given to the world during the War—the only picture of him known ; and he came from Mecca with a picture in his mind of fame and distinction drawn for him somewhat rhetorically by my two friends in his service, the Foreign Minister Sheikh Fouad 'ul-Khatib and Captain Yanni. That we were both disappointed at first, I cannot say. But I soon discovered that the lingering uncertainty which I carried with me from New York was not justified.

I shook hands with His Majesty as he stepped out of the car and walked behind him into the Palace. But as we

AMEER ZEID.
Fourth son of ex-King Husein.

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were ascending the stairs he looked back to see where I was, and, taking me courteously by the hand, made me walk by his side. The furniture in the Palace is not superior to that of the guest-house. The usual diwans covered with cotton cloth, the usual rush-bottomed arm-chairs, and the usual, if not more inferior, rugs. It is Arab democracy, which is not unpleasant to one coming from America. There are other signs of it, outward signs, in King Husein, as in his dress for instance and his manner of living.

His picture does not do him justice, and I have it to thank for my second pleasant surprise in Jeddah. Here is not a hard-visaged Arab, severe and saturnine. Here is a suavity rather with an undercurrent of sadness, and a serenity coupled with genial grace. He is, of all Arab Kings, the most kingly, if not also the most spiritual and the least clannish. Nor is this strange. For he is a descendant of the Prophet and he has lived twenty years in Constantinople. His charming personality, therefore, has two sources, innate and acquired—the Prophetic and diplomatic.

In his face is an eloquent expression of both. His white beard is not flowing and vagrant; his delicate white skin has in it veins of pink; his straight nose is not formidable; his soft brown eyes are fortified with a ring of blue around the pupils; and his high brow is shown to advantage when he wears a turban instead of the *sumadah* [1] and *ighal*. Withal, he has a smile than which I have not known a more captivating, except it be the smile of his enemy Ibn Sa'oud King Abd'ul-Aziz; and his voice—it is softer than the light in his eyes; and his hands—they are more eloquent of blood and more cogent in their proof of a noble, nay, an apostolic ancestry, than all the books of lineage in Arabia. Besides, these excellences were more enhanced in my eyes, because they were devoid of pomp

[1] *Sumadah* in Al-Hijaz, Gutrah in Najd, Kufiyah in Syria, is the headkerchief worn under the *ighal* or cord.

and pose. The King when travelling is not distinguishable from any other Arab sheikh except by the yellow silk *ighal* and the lighter yellow silk *sumadah* under it. The *ighal* is an heirloom of the Numaiy, the King's immediate ancestry—the Crown of its ruling house. But the turban he wears is distinguishable from other white turbans by a few inches of the end falling over his right ear. This democratic *tenue* is common to all the Kings of Arabia.

His Majesty sat in a corner of the diwan Arab-fashion, that is with one knee folded under him, the other raised as a rest to his arm, and offered me the seat to his right. Something very strange then happened. I said that he was, outwardly at least, democratic. But the citizens of Jeddah came in to prove that in the salaaming ceremony he was not; and I wondered whether the Turkish manner in urban Arabia began or ended in Al-Hijaz.

They entered, the distinguished citizens of Jeddah, and came up in a line, silent and head-bowed, their hands folded across their breasts, to make salaam; and every one bent reverently over Majesty's hand, kissing it once, twice, three times, back and palm. Some kissed it multitudinously in rapid succession, stopped a second for breath, and bussed it a last buss for good measure. Others, not satisfied with the hand, rubbed their lips also against the royal knee. His Majesty in return kissed a few of his subjects on the cheek, and from a few others he withdrew his hand. These were royal cousins, sherifs of the ruling house. Thus are the various degrees of servility and royal favour made manifest, made public. Every one knows his rank in servitude and is not ashamed to betray it by kissing, for instance, the royal knee or by just attempting to kiss the royal hand. These are the urban, the Turkefied, Arabs.

But the Turkefying process did not reach the Bedu, who remain free of all the Abd'ul-Hamidian ceremonies imported into the Hijaz. The beduin comes into Jeddah, stands in the street under the Palace window, and calls out, O thou Abu-Ali! And he makes his demand in

forthright speech, as man to man, without preliminaries or embellishments. In his tone is the spirit of equality, the spirit of the desert. King Husein accepted this as he accepted from the civilized, the Turkefied, the kiss of reverence and loyalty. Aye, he accepted with a smile the mark of servitude as he accepted with a smile the liberty-and-equality manner of the Bedu. He did not change in either circumstance. He did not order or advise a modification in the one or the other. Does it astound you, this royal and apostolic conduct?

The urban Arab is usually a merchant, the beduin is usually a fighter. Both are necessary for the welfare of the State and the maintenance of the throne. We take from the one to give to the other; and sometimes we have to humiliate the one that we might be able to take and give, especially if the other be hard-headed and carries withal a gun. Indeed, the Bedu understand but two languages—money and arms—the language of force pre-eminently; and King Husein unfortunately did not or could not speak forcefully in either tongue. He was firm in the belief that the smile of the descendant of the Prophet was riches to the Faithful, and that his frown was force sufficient. Besides, he always thought well of the Bedu.

'The Bedu, O worthy one, are simple, and poor, and ignorant. But they are honest, and they stand by their word.'

There is much to doubt in the last half of His Majesty's statement. But I learned afterwards that he was speaking, as he often did, in innuendoes, and that he meant to cudgel the English who, in his opinion, in their diplomacy and their pledges, are not even like the Bedu. In the many political conversations that followed he recurred frequently to this subject, and he was always woefully cryptic. He spoke in symbols and riddles and proverbs. Seldom did he mention his enemies by name. Seldom did he think a straight thought or express it in a straightforward manner. But in our first conversation he touched but the fringe of

politics, preferring, in a public *majlis*, to hold forth on religion and the Arabs, illustrating his words from the Koran and the *Hadith* (Sayings of the Prophet).

'The Arabs and Al-Islam are one—who supports the Arabs supports Al-Islam—cling to the bond of Allah and disperse not—Al-Islam, O brilliant one, fights only those who fight it—we fight only in self-defence—I say, in self-defence. Al-Islam teaches simplicity, faithfulness, equality and contentment. . . . No, there is nothing to prevent a Muslem from marrying a Christian girl. . . . It were well if the Syrians of America came to Al-Hijaz to live. They could continue to trade and be happy—I say, be happy. They would also help us in building an Arab kingdom based upon Arab unity.'

I had conveyed to His Majesty the salaams of my Syrian friends in New York and of certain Arabs and pro-Arab Egyptians in Cairo. 'We greatly appreciate this visit, O worthy one, and we thank thee for it. Thou hast come from the farthest country and the greatest—I say, the greatest—to a country which is poor and unattractive, with seas between it and civilization. But thou hast come in obedience to a call of the heart. Thou hast returned after a long migration to the cradle of thy highest virtues. Allah keep thee—Allah enfold thee in his blessings.'

His silken voice drops into inaudibility at times. Whereupon, he repeats his word, preluding it with an 'I say,' or 'I say, O worthy one;' and sometimes in emphasis he repeats his words. The 'I say,' *aghoul*, is as common with the Arabs, however, as with the English.

The distinguished citizens of Jeddah, as His Majesty spoke, were seated all around on the diwans like so many statues of reverence and silence; and when the most ancient among them got up to ask for permission to leave, they all followed suit, performing again, with the same energy and exactness, the ceremony of 'kissing hand.' Thinking that it was time for me also to leave, I made a vain attempt to get up; for seated Arab fashion in my

European clothes, I felt I was tied into knots and that I had to go through the slow process of untying before I could resume my ambulant habit. But His Majesty motioned with his hand, 'Stay;' and so I availed myself of the opportunity to change my position and thus facilitate the untying process. He then spoke a word of apology, which was most gracious and sincere—both eloquent and true. 'We are a simple people, and within our crude way of living we offer all that is available. Let thy love and devotion intercede for us.'

I tried to emulate him in the like expression, and I failed. For when I said something about his condescending to come from Mecca to meet me, he silenced me with a motion of his hand and added to my confusion and shame. 'Shall we not traverse a few leagues to meet him who has crossed many seas to visit us?'

CHAPTER III

A LESSON IN ZOOLOGY AND HEALING

KING HUSEIN believes firmly in the principle of reciprocity, whether in politics or in ethics ; and he finds, as usual, in the Koran the strongest argument for his belief. It is ordained, for instance, that the Muslem should pray and fast and pay the *zakat* money ; in return for which Allah promised him *Al-Jannat* (Paradise). This is reciprocity in duties and rights. Now, the English exacted a pledge from the Arabs to fight with the Allies during the World War, which pledge the Arabs made good. The English in return have pledged themselves to help the Arabs to achieve unity and independence ; but they were not, alas ! entirely faithful to their pledge.

At times when His Majesty mentioned or thought of the English, he got the blues. He did not always succeed even in concealing his anger and indignation. But he had in those days a man from Hadhramout, who was his Minister of Finance, and whom he would call into his presence for amusement whenever the pall of the English was upon him. The Hadhramout Minister was a man of weak nerves, very sensitive to strange voices and motions, and quick to react to the least adventure of insects and creeping things. In plain words, he was a coward, the first coward in the Hashemite Government. There was another, the poet ; for His Majesty believes that every poet is a coward.

But neither strange voices nor shadows, nor the bugaboos of politics affected King Husein in a manner unbe-

coming of man. He is strong of sinews, firm of heart. When the Turks were bombarding Mecca and the Kaaba, their shells fell on his palace, piercing the walls of his private *majlis* when he was therein. But he did not move or show the least sign of perturbation. As for the Turks, they were in his sight but like insects and creeping things, over which he shed his pity and with which at times he frightened people. He is, I learned, particularly fond of little animals and is familiar with their nature and habits. Moreover, they were in those days of especial benefit to him ; for with the help of the Hadhramout Minister they dispersed all royal cares and killed the greater monster that darkened his hall at the mere mention of the English.

One of his black slaves came to me of an evening and said : Saiyedna desires thee—forthwith. I hastened to the Palace, where I found the British Consul seated opposite His Majesty on the diwan. Evidently the Hadhramout Minister was not within reach of the black slaves. But am I, the thought was irresistible, to act in his stead, am I his understudy? No, King Husein could not be so ungracious to a guest.

He started his conversation by giving me another surprise. He spoke of the weather ! He, the Descendant of the Prophet, the Grand Sherif of Mecca, the King of Al-Hijaz, the Great Emancipator—these and more titles graced the communications of the Foreign Office to His Majesty—he condescended to talk about the weather. The English have taught him the trick of talking about the weather ! I do not think, however, that he has learned from them anything else, except it be a few syllables in the phraseology of diplomacy. But this phraseology can better be acquired in Stamboul, and King Husein is a master of it, as we shall see.

The weather was the general topic that day, however, for it rained the first time, I was told, in twelve years. It rained a drizzle in places for about fifteen minutes, and the joy was great. The King told us that along the sixty-mile

front, between Jeddah and Mecca, there were spasmodic and local cloud-bursts—a feeble barrage, fired here and there by the east wind. After all, His Majesty's talk about the weather was not perfunctory. He held forth on the clouds, the winds, and the seasons in eloquent and lucid speech. Indeed, he is most charming when he is not on his favourite topic, the politics of Arabia and Great Britain.

'Hast thou not witnessed, O brilliant one, the way of the clouds?—their idiosyncrasy, their false promise of rain, their stinted bounty, and their generosity at times when it does more harm than good?'

The British Government again, thought I. But he was quick to come down to what did not seem to have any symbolic significance—to the seasons of the year. There are, it seems, five seasons in Al-Hijaz. To the traveller, however, there is but one, which is neither summer nor winter nor autumn nor spring, but a colourless and not infrequently a most exasperating combination of all four.

'The Arabs of these climes, O worthy one, divide summer into two parts: the first, which is evil; the second, which is good. In the first, that is in May and June, the rain is a calamity because it brings out of the earth a certain worm which devours the grass. Finished, no pasture.' His Majesty stroked one hand against the other and continued. 'But the latter summer rain—there in truth is the white hand of Allah. The winds are our enemy, in all seasons, for they drive away from Al-Hijaz the blessings of the rain-clouds. But the mountains south of Mecca hold them back at times, and At-Taief, the garden of Al-Hijaz, catches the blessings of heaven. . . . Of the nature of our soil, as of our people, is contentment. Our soil requires but a little rain, and the fields are verdant with thankfulness.'

He then asked me, of a sudden changing the subject, if I had ever seen the *dhob*. The *dhob* is an animal we meet with everywhere—in Arabic books—in poetry, in prose,

in history, sacred and profane. I have always wondered what it is like, for I have never come upon a description of it; Arab writers thinking, I suppose, that he who knows Arabic must know the *dhob*. My ignorance, moreover, was doublefold, so too my humiliation, because I did not know its name in English.

But the royal and benign gentleman, who will give us a lesson in zoology, will not only tell us what the *dhob* is, but actually, *billah*! he will show us the animal. The poet, the second Minister of Fear, the first was the Minister of Finance, was present, and when His Majesty clapped for one of the slaves, he seemed as if he would jump out of the window. 'The *dhob*, the *dhob* is coming.'

The King did not say whether it was a year old or a hundred, whether it was the size of a rat or as big as a crocodile. But the black slave soon dispelled my fear; for he came in holding something in his hand.

'Bring it here,' said His Majesty, and the slave placed it on the diwan between him and myself. The British Consul was on tiptoe with excitement. He even rose from his chair, forgetting all formality, and came near to see the animal.

'This is a chameleon,' he said, and I translated chameleon to the King. 'No, no,' said His Majesty. 'The chameleon's back is round, the back of the *dhob*, see you, is flat. The chameleon's tail is soft like his body, but the tail of this one—give me, O worthy one, thy hand.'

I do not think His Majesty's intentions were honourable; for he took the Consul's hand and pressed it against the rough spinous portion of the animal. The Englishman felt the sting and showed it in his face. His Majesty laughed. I too now know how rough and sharp are the thorns in its tail; and I know, thanks to King Husein, something of its nature. But I still ask what is the *dhob*? Is it a lizard? Is it a species of crocodile? or is it a chameleon gone wrong? I am still confounded, and I'd like to know what in the language of Shakespeare and

Shelley is the *dhob*. But my royal Professor from Mecca has something more to say about it.

'This is a small *dhob*, O thou esteemed Consul. I have seen one that long,' opening his arms; 'he might be called the *dhob* of politics. Its tail is half the size of its body, and it is very knotty. The Arabic proverb, *Knottier than the tail of the dhob*, is true; and this tail is his sword; with a few blows he kills his opponent. But this is a small *dhob*—there is neither good nor evil in him.'

The slave at the door announced the Hadhramout Minister.

The King quickly hid the animal under his jubbah, saying: 'Yes, yes, there is some good in him.'

His Excellency the Minister of Finance entered and took his usual seat, three or four spaces down. The King motioned to a place near him, and turned towards me with a furtive smile. The second Minister of Fear, the poet, knowing what was coming, moved toward the door; for no sooner the Hadhramout Minister took his seat than the hand of Majesty, with the *dhob* in it, stealthily, quietly placed the animal in his lap. The poor man uttered a cry, 'O, my Master, O my Lord!' screaming like a frightened child; and he jumped from the diwan shaking his jubbah, and towards the door, running against the black slaves there on guard.

His Majesty laughed—we all laughed merrily, like children. Even the poet who was still seated with his arms folded across his breast as usual, and who had been attempting all along to repress a smile and control withal a fear, surrendered at last to the general mirth, giggling like a school girl. But His Majesty, becoming serious again, turned to him and half-mockingly said: 'Thou hast no right to laugh—no, no: no right hast thou until thou art willing to ride a horse or go up in an aeroplane.'

The poet-Minister feared the two as much as his contemporary from Hadhramout feared the *dhob*.

When we left the King's *majlis* that evening the Consul

THE AUTHOR.
In Hijaz Dress.

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said to me : ' It is the most interesting hour I have yet spent with His Majesty. He is, outside of politics, a brilliant conversationalist and a gracious host.' The which from a consul, though not devoid of truth, was, I thought, unfair. Do not all people in politics speak at times only with the purpose of concealing their minds ? But I learned afterwards what the British Consul and Agent in Jeddah had to suffer in unravelling the skeins and solving the riddles of the Hashemite Secretariate's communications, which were often written by the King himself. I too realized during my stay of a month in Jeddah how capable was His Majesty in knotting his ideas, and how wonderfully proficient in ambiguity and evasion. He would make the circuit around a certain point, as if it were the Kaaba, seven times without touching it ; coming alarmingly near it ; and then quickly receding from it ; but his hearer, in an attempt to follow, becomes giddy from the circumambulation ; knocks his head against a wall or against a door in the temple of mystery ; and, turning around to see where he is, finds himself, alas ! very far away from Majesty and completely mortified, not knowing what to say. Nor is there a better refuge in silence. Should he say : ' I understand, O my Lord,' he will set himself down as one of his official sycophants ; and should he keep silent, his silence might be misconstrued. Therefore, to escape both difficulties, he nods, and nods, awaiting patiently the end.

I have often been attracted by a beautiful gesture of His Majesty's to the mysterious power in his hand and expression : aye, I have been like one enchanted by the magnetic flow from his fingers and his eyes. For what is diplomacy, and what is truth, and what is wisdom as compared with the magic of one who makes you oblivious of the theatricalities of men and the pyrotechnics of nations ?

Indeed, my Lord of Hashemite eminence and diplomatic nodosities hath pauses in his speech, which humiliate all eloquence ; and gestures which can solve even the

riddles of the ancient priests ; and glances which enthral his hearer's mind and heart. He holds out the palm of his right hand or both in emphasis, when he feels that he has proven his point ; he folds his arms when he pauses for a reply ; he rearranges his *ighal* or his turban when he thinks you are dubious or losing interest ; he changes his position on the diwan when he starts, as it were, a new paragraph ; and he lays his hands on his knees tilting the head, when he makes an argument irrefutable. Follows, a smile, and silence. What matters, therefore, his meaning and purpose, when he himself is there before you, a personification of majesty and magic ?

At times, when he changed his sitting position, I would avail myself of the opportunity to ask a question that has no connection with the subject, stating, in apology for my indecorum, that I was a traveller seeking knowledge. ' Indeed, O thou learned one, there is still left of Qoraish [1] about five thousand. They are of three sections of the tribe, one section of which lives near At-Taief : and there is still between them and the descendants of the Prophet much sympathy and good feeling. . . . As for Benu Sa'd, those whose ancestors nursed the Prophet, their *dirah* is also near At-Taief, and there is a family among them and of them who have a wonderful knowledge of surgery and medicine. They inherit it one from the other. . . . Do you know, *ayuha'n-najib* (O thou brilliant one), that fever can be cured by cauterization ? Benu Sa'd the surgeons thus cure it.'

His Majesty held out the proof of it in himself. He had the fever once and he was cauterized. He showed me the marks of the two actual cauteries, one on his right arm, the other on his left leg.

' The secret is in choosing the place for the burn, and that requires a good knowledge of anatomy. The surgeons of Benu Sa'd do not leave the cautery open for a discharge of matter, as others do. They seal it (help it to heal)

[1] The tribe of the Prophet Muhammad.

'with a little salt—I say, a little salt, which they strew upon it.'

Having then observed a twitch, indicating pain, in my arm, the King inquired about it and continued : 'Allah may cure thee, O dear one, through the medium of a surgeon of Benu Sa'd.' A day after, of a certainty, the surgeon arrived from Mecca. He had come by order of His Majesty to treat my neuritis. He did not examine me professionally, Allah be praised ! but he asked me three questions only, and then said : 'Cauterization will not benefit thee. Heat thou some butter, mix it with a little mashed garlic, and rub thrice a day. Thus wilt thou be cured by the help of Allah, and thou wilt remember me with kindness.' Saying which, he salaamed and walked out.

In sooth I do remember thee, O Brother Arab, O thou camel-herd and royal surgeon, O thou prince of all the doctors I have met ! And I shall ever remember that simplicity of thy manner, and that brilliance in thine eye, and that grandeur in thy voice and gesture. I shall remember, too, that thou didst not prescribe for me thy special treatment as do the specialists in civilized lands. But thou hast coupled Allah with thy remedy and thus art thou an honest leech and a true sage. I shall always remember thee, O thou royal surgeon and camel-herd, because in the remembrance of thee I forget my pain. And this, by the life of Allah and thine, is the best cure, the balm that truly heals.

CHAPTER IV

A DISCIPLE IN NOMADISM AND WISDOM

THERE is no need in ordinary hospitality of a liaison officer between a host and his guest. You may ask for what you want, you may refuse what is offered, you may even have an especial desire, without any messengers, between you and your host, except good taste and common sense. But royal hospitality is different. The first rule is that you must not refuse anything offered you or conferred upon you.

The kings of Arabia, despite what is attributed to them of clannishness and coarse taste, are in this respect like all other kings. They never surprise a guest, lest he become confused in speech or conduct. Therefore, in addition to the servants, they appoint a special person as companion to the favoured one—a sort of liaison officer between him and Majesty—whose business, like a lightning rod, is to absorb desires and spontaneities, and conduct them in mild form from one end to another.

My friend Constantine Yanni was this lightning rod; and on the third day after my arrival, he came to me with a flow of speech which flashed with titles and decorations. This would have been annihilating had it fallen upon me direct from the lips of Majesty. But I reminded Constantine of the hermit of Freiké and of twenty years the said hermit spent in America, a pitifully democratic country, without even a reminiscence of any title or decoration. And then, impressing the matter strongly: 'I am at thy mercy, O Constantine. Be quick to intercept the boon

before it falls.' Whereupon, he said: 'What about presents?' 'Of presents I will accept anything that comes.'

On the following day one of the black slaves of the Palace came carrying upon his two hands, from His Majesty the King, a bundle wrapt in a cloth of silk, on top of which was a Meccan dagger in a scabbard of filigreed gold; and in the bundle was a *kiswah*—a suit of Arab garments—and a piece of the curtain of the Kaaba, on which *In the name of the Most Merciful God* is elaborately designed in what looks like a bas-relief in gold. My friend Constantine's mission was a great success. He must have said to His Majesty: This Rihani is a hermit, and sacred things are more worthy of him than a title. Of a truth, the Kaaba curtain-piece is the most sacred and precious thing that ever comes out of the Holy City, and is seldom presented to a Christian.

I was happy too in my change of clothes. I put on the white cotton smock with the long tapering sleeves, embroidered in red around the collar and down the opening on the breast; girded myself with the Meccan dagger *judmiyah* [1]; slipped my bare feet into sandals; covered my head with a richly wrought Indian *sumadah* and an *igha* of gold thread, and went straightway to thank His Majesty. He opened his arms when he saw me in this guise, and exclaimed: 'O my dear one, O my own eye!' embracing me, pressing me to his heart. Needless to say that I too was moved, so much so, that I felt something forming in my eye; and I hastened to where I usually kept my handkerchief, but not finding even a pocket in my new garment, I dried my tear with the end of my sleeve. His Majesty laughed and said: 'Verily, thou art now of the *Bedu*.'

We then sat down to a political discussion, which did

[1] A dagger is called in Al-Hijáz *qudmiyah*, a front-piece, because it is worn in front. The 'q' in Al-Hijaz and in Najd is pronounced 'j'—*judmiyah*. In Al-Yaman it is called *jambiyah*, a side-piece, because it is worn on the side

not last long. For the French Consul and some Jeddah worthies came in to say salaam, and His Majesty, changing the subject, spoke to us, for the benefit of the new beduin, methinks, about the Bedu and their unwritten law of protection and hospitality.

'Three have the right to *khewwah* (brotherhood) and protection: the temporary guest,[1] the moving tent,[2] and the *rafiq*, or traveller's companion. When a temporary guest comes into a town or a *dirah*, the first house or tent he passes by claims him, having the first right to offer him hospitality—I say, O my dear one, the first right. If the traveller goes to the next-door neighbour, the people in the first house consider it an offence and ask the neighbour to give back the guest. "He passed first by our door, *billah*! and are we not Arabs, and have we not, of the bounty of Allah, the wherewithal to receive a guest?" If they do not make this protest, at least, they are looked upon with disdain. Some of them will even insist upon their right, clutching at the guest and forcing him back to save their honour. . . . He who entertains a passing traveller, O brilliant one, has to offer him protection for twelve hours after his departure, even if he has to travel with him, or send some one to accompany him the distance of a day's travel. . . . To ask for assistance of kinsmen against a foe has its limits. The right ceases beyond the fifth degree; —that is, I have the right to ask my cousins only from the fifth down—I say, from the fifth only. . . . No, there is no difference in this respect between Arabs and *ashraf* (sherifs = descendants of the Prophet). But in case of a murder premeditated, the life of a sherif is entitled to a double *diah*, that is, two lives.'

'In adjudication all Arab rulers continue to observe certain customs of the Bedu, because the Koranic law is not

[1] A passing traveller.

[2] He who enters the *dirah* seeking its protection, sets up his *tonb* or booth of hair in its pasture land. By the tent or *tonb* is meant the nomad himself, even though he has none.

'always accepted in the desert. Of the traditions of the Bedu, for instance, is that any Arab can be and has to be a judge, when he is called upon. But when the difference is between two tribes, the case is heard in the private *majlis* of the King.

His Majesty, relating of the trial, said : 'Each party selects twelve men to prove his case, the plaintiff selecting his from the tribe of his opponent, and vice versa. Of the twelve men four affirm, four inform, and four adjudicate. The first four, O thou brilliant one, state the case ; the second prove or disprove it ; the third decide it. Says the affirmer : The case is thus and thus. Says the informer : I saw or I heard thus and thus. Says the adjudicator : the decision is thus and thus.'

How approximately come the Bedu in their litigations to the judicial system of civilized nations. They are even more certain of discovering the truth and achieving the highest justice. For do not the plaintiff and the defendant choose their men, that is their lawyers and witnesses and judges, each from the tribe of his opponent? And do not the adjudicators or judges resemble the jury in Europe?

When I mentioned this to His Majesty, he said : 'Allah, praised be he, did not signal out the Europeans for all the human virtues. We Arabs have a few. And thou, O my dear brilliant one, art better informed of this. Not everything that comes from Europe is free from fault or flaw—is perfect. The Europeans may still be ignorant of certain things, the knowledge of which we possess and can impart. Take medicine, for example. Thou hast seen, O dear one, the best doctors ; but they did not cure thee. May Allah, through the medium of *our* doctor, rid thee of thy pains. Thou wilt then say to them : Recovery has come to me from the vicinity of Mecca, from Allah and his Prophet.'

He then said : 'It may be hallucination, O dear one—I say, hallucination—imagination. Animals are also subject to it like human beings. I will cite an example

among camels. When a certain one refuses for physical or temperamental reasons to suckle her foal, we take it to another. But she too, for even a better reason, withholds her milk. She will not suckle a stranger. Now, what does the Arab do, the Arab of short-wit? He is not always short-witted, O brilliant one. He blindfolds the beast and then gags her, thus driving the wind inward and causing the stomach to swell. Whereupon, with a sharp knife he performs a slight operation, makes a few incisions in her genitals, deep enough to be felt—I say, deep enough to be felt The foal is then brought near her and the bandages are removed. Instinctively, she turns her head to the region of pain, smells blood, sees the foal, and is duped. She yields her udder with motherly tenderness. No, the Arabs are not slow-witted, O my dear one. They are also as quick with their eye and hand. Hast thou not seen the boy that comes to the lagoon every day about sunset carrying a basket and a stick in his hand? I watch him often with amusement from this window.'

I had indeed seen that boy the day before from a closer vantage, from the opposite side of the lagoon, when he was knee-deep in the water, prying about, peering through it. At short intervals he would stop, strike something at the bottom with his stick, place his foot quickly upon it, and stoop to pick it up. He had caught something, which he placed in his basket. Slowly wading through the clear blue water, slowly with his keen eyes penetrating to the bottom, and every time the stick went down, something was brought up. Not once did he miss, so trained was his hand, so quick his stroke, so keen his eye. He was catching crabs.

His Majesty was so pleased that like himself I had also observed this object of wonder. And he went on, from one subject to another, holding forth on the strange and interesting features of a country which he knew as well as the Holy Book.

'No, Allah hath not deprived us of all the virtues, O

worthy one, nor hath he deprived us of all the fruits of his bounty. There is a *wadi* near At-Taief, Wadi Liyah by name, in which the pomegranate grows. Big pomegranates, some as big as the head of a man, and with seeds that have very little of the hard matter in them—full of the sweet juice. Excellent remedy for the lungs. Some of the fastidious take it like a sherbet squeezed into a glass. But a pomegranate should be eaten, not drunk; for half its taste is in the pleasure of exerting the teeth upon it. Our young men have pomegranate competitions, in which a prize is given to him who eats the whole fruit first and without dropping a single seed on the ground. . . . Yes, yes; it is a competition. Young men everywhere, methinks, will have their games. . . . We have also a plant that grows in the late summer; it has a white flower, on which the bees feed; and they produce a honey unsurpassable in the whole world. I say so upon the assurance of a distinguished traveller, the Khedive Abbas. For when he came here a-pilgrimaging, he ate of our honey, and added to the two testimonies,[1] saying: "And I testify that the honey of Al-Hijaz is the best honey in the world." As for our pomegranates of Wadi Liyah—"From Wadi Liyah," the hawkers cry. "Good for *hediyah*" (present)! When I sent some to the Sultan Abd'ul-Hamid, he exclaimed on beholding them: "Praised be Allah and Peace upon his Prophet! These fruits are not only the best of their kind in the world, but they come from the best spot in the world." Of a truth, O my son, we have a few good things, and we are therewith content. Our pomegranates and our honey, here be a proof that Allah, praised be he, hath not forgotten us Arabs, the Arabs of Al-Hijaz.'

That they might be forgotten one day is not morally conceivable since they have in Jeddah a form of piety and wisdom the like of which I have not seen anywhere else in Arabia. It is a club of seven members only, all sages—a

[1] The two Testimonies of the Muslem are: I testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah.

small circle of light, without a line of darkness to define it; a unique institution. The founder is the Mayor of Jeddah, who is one of those Oriental sages that are rare in the public life of Europe and America. He is a simple soul with an ingenious mind, who realizes that even in India, where he spent many years, civilization has a few things that Jeddah might well envy. But he will not concede that man in a desert waste cannot order the world to him. He defines civilization as man's right relation between God and Nature, and finds the right means to such an end in a prayer rug and a hand-ball. He is the organizer and the moving spirit of the Prayer Club of Jeddah.

But it is more than a Prayer Club, for it combines its exercises so they include the body and the mind as well as the soul. It might be better called the Koran-Athletic Club. Even then the name is not inclusive. A triangle of practical wisdom, balancing the three purposes of life, without anything to hold it together—a unique conception—a Club without a club house, without a president, without by-laws, without dues. There is but an understanding, an article of faith, and a pledge to attend the daily meetings. The understanding is based on the article of faith, which is the Mayor's definition of civilization, and the article of faith is made a living principle at least an hour each day.

Bring your prayer rug and meet us on the sand outside the city at sundown. There, on an elevation, beyond the citadel, I joined these good people one day, and in spite of a deficiency, an irregularity rather, in my Triangle, they took me into their blessed circle. But I was beaten by their elder in throwing the ball, and by their cadet in a poetic tilt. The meeting was always started by standing in a line facing Mecca to say the sunset prayer; and the member who led in prayers as *imam* would be the first afterward to doff his jubbah and start the ball game. They use a cannon ball about the size of what we use in bowling.

which they hold in both hands, swinging it in a half-circle between the legs and above the head, preliminary to the throw. He who throws farthest scores. After the game, a few movements in callisthenics are executed, and then the discussion, the intellectual exercise, to complete the Triangle.

Having taken you, O worthy one, to the Club, allow me now to introduce the members. Here is Hajji Zainal, the octogenarian who beat me at throwing the ball. He is brother to the Mayor Abdullah Zainal, and is fond of quoting from the Persian poets, Hafez and Sa'di and Jalal'ud-Din Roumi. The Zainals are of Persian origin, and Hajji Zainal quotes in the original which his brother translates. Here is one of his favourite quatrains from Jalal'ud-Din Roumi the Sufi poet :

> 'When first my lips cajoled the flute, it moaned
> And told the secret of the world's ill :
> It said : When I was severed from Love's Tree
> I wept, and all the world is weeping still.'

The Collector of Customs, Sheikh Muhammad Tawil is the Beau Brummel of Jeddah. His jubbah, which he changes every day, tells of a variety in his wardrobe that ranges from striped cashmere to flowered silk. Under the jubbah is a waistcoat equally radiant in design—one of light green material, with green buttons of a lighter shade I particularly remember—and under the waistcoat is a robe of pungee silk or of barred Damascene weave, which comes down to a little above the ankle upon which peeps the famous linen pantaloons, whose lace or open work grace a pair of patent leather pumps. His turban alone is like that of his fellows—a regular Hijaz turban, which is a bonnet of green and red and yellow cloth woven together in mosaic fashion, and around which is wound, not too heavy, a white sash. But this Arab Beau Brummel is also a man of business, the most practical and the most energetic member of the Hijaz Government. He collects and he pays out with a conscience and an accuracy unexcelled in Arabia, except it be by the Parsis of Aden

The Ghabel brothers, Sulaiman and Abd'ul-Qader, most sincerely flatter the Honourable Collector, but they do not always succeed in imitating him. The lace upon their linen underwear is always more evident, however, and their perfume announces them before they approach. All Arabs love perfume; but the Ghabel brothers are artists in the composition of essences. I have always imagined East and West flowing from their robes, without any particular spice or flower intruding itself, without even noticing in the swooning effusion a waft from a Paris bottle. But they are none the less extremely pious. If they pay five pounds gold for a bottle of French perfume, they pay their homage five times a day to Allah and the Prophet. Sheikh Sulaiman seems to think that it is necessary to train oneself in mortal ease preliminary to an immortality of it.

But Sheikh Naser of Najd, who thirty years ago shook the sands of the Nufoud from his sandals, remains a Wahhabi both stern and serene. He yields not to the luxuries of the people of Al-Hijaz, but he frowns not upon them. He has learned tolerance in his travels, and is a true Brother, disdaining not to pray, as a Wahhabi of south Najd, with Muslems of other sects.

Opposite to Sheikh Naser in belief is the Persian Mulla Husein of Shiraz, he who is a master in mechanics and a disciple of Jalal'ud-Din Roumi. He supplies the lux lights to Jeddah, repairs its sewing machines, and airs his Sufism in the bazaars. But the Prayer Club is non-sectarian. Bring your prayer rug and meet us on the sands. If you have a new book of verse, bring it also with you. But Mulla Husein carries his book in his head; and it is a rare joy to hear him intone in opulent Persian accents the couplets of our Master Jalal'ud-Din.

'I am a piece of wood,
Cut from the Tree of Love,
And made into a flute:
The flute forevermore pines for the grove.'

Although I was but a passing traveller, a moving guest, I too feel that I am a piece of wood cut from that blessed tree—the tree of the Prayer Club of Jeddah—and made into a flute. . . . And the flute forevermore pines for the grove.

CHAPTER V

CIRCULATING BOONS

ABOUT four in the morning I was awakened by a voice, loud and harsh, void of a single pleasant intonation, crying in the street: 'Arise and praise Allah, the Living, the Eternal!' The volunteer circulating muazzen was passing beneath my balcony. 'Sleep no more: the dawn is at the door!' No one had delegated the gentleman to the sleeping population, except it be the circulating orchestra of Jeddah. But of this later.

The circulating muazzen was doing a little good work on his own account, something akin to almsgiving; but having nothing, I suppose, to give, he went around at that Muhammadan hour waking the innocent from sleep. 'Allah is great! It's late, it's late! Sleep no more! The dawn's at the door! Get up and pray! Allah, obey!' I could have thrown upon him the broken shutter of my balcony window. But his zeal is appreciated by a pious population.

A tall figure in a white robe, passing through the city streets at that grey, moon-veiled hour, would have awakened a different feeling in me, had he a redeeming virtue in his voice. But to perform a sacred duty in a raucous, barbarous yawp were ungodly even to the Prophet. I tried to sleep again, forgetting and forgiving; and again, not long after, I was awakened by a voice crying, *Hali'éééb* (milk)! No, there isn't a good voice in all Jeddah.

The milkman in London cries 'wo-hoo,' curt and sharp,

in imitation, I was told, of the cow. Which is bad enough. But in Jeddah the long drawn metallic *iii-eeeeb* is infernal. Give me Beyrouth and Damascus to wake up in : for there, the human voice is an improvement on the herd's, sometimes even on the songbird's. The milkman there is poetic withal. Pure as the dawn ! Eye of the fawn ! And not a word about milk. It's indeed a joy to rise to such poetry and music. But in Jeddah, as in London, the milkman is a vulgarian, a boor. *Hali'éééb* ! It sounded like Hurry up ! Luckily for him he hurried in passing ; and I tried again to sleep.

But someone always does murder sleep in Jeddah. For while I was still half-awake, I heard a whirring noise outside, not very near, like that of an aeroplane ; and then, a knock at my door, followed by a voice, that of the Foreign Secretary Sheikh Fouad : ' Get up, get up quick.' He almost tore the mosquito netting in pulling me out of bed. ' Hurry up, come out and see—see our aeroplanes.' The Hijaz Government had four in those days, and one of them, of a certainty, was circling over the Palace, serenading His Hashemite Majesty with the lute of the Western world—the motor—and fusillading the citadel of sleep. The only defence now was to abandon the citadel and gird me for the day.

It was a raw morning, the wind having executed a volte-face during the night, which is not unusual on the Hijaz coast, where rarely more than two winds blow, succeeding each other with equal violence. The *aziab* or south wind is the harbinger of the simoom, which sucks the humidity out of the atmosphere. Otherwise, it is not conducive of any piety. I could never get into the mood of a pilgrim on an *aziab* day. But the north wind, which often comes at its heels, is worse in its immediate effect, because the necessary change of clothes is not always possible.

One has to go like the Bedu in but a single garment to combat the *aziab's* burning blast ; and then, without

warning, comes this blustering monster, blowing like mad, chilling the very sands which yesterday were too hot for the bare feet of even a camel-herd. The north wind is also exasperating, because the sun, which often comes with it, is as helpless against its winter flow as Caesar's dust. All that morning it blew outside, and I shivered within. There was no argument against the north wind's staff of attorneys, ranting through every window. Because of the lattice screens, the lower half, they could not be ruled out by the upper half, the blinds.

There was nothing to do therefore but to wrap me in an *aba* and sit tight, listening to Sheikh Fouad chanting poetry. He always sat cross-legged, even though on a little rush-bottomed chair, and swung his torso to and fro as if he were riding a camel, the while he droned and moaned his rhymes. It was a fitting accompaniment to the north wind, evoking all the dreariness of the desert waste. And what a memory! He carried an anthology in his head. Any incident of the least significance in the daily life of man and beast, he could illustrate with a line from the ancient poets. But he was particularly fond of intoning in an ineffably mournful manner his own accents. Hear his lacrymose Muse:

> 'Myself in tears to sorrow I resign,
> For tears are of the clemency divine.'

But when he opened his anthology, which I preferred, he became alternately amorous and war-like. I would shut my eyes and imagine myself in midwinter shivering around a half-hearted fire in Mt. Lebanon or near a wheezing radiator in a Paris hotel, while a strange voice from the past of Arabia was droning rhymes of battle or plaintively intoning of love and separation.

> 'In far Iraq is Leila sick, 'tis said;
> I wish I were the doctor near her bed.'
>
> . . . . . .

'The night, and the steed, and the desert me ken,
And the sword, and the lance, and the parchment, and pen.'

I would then close my ears and open my eyes. Blow on, drone on, my friends. Through the lattice screen, I beheld the sun in all its Arab ecstasy dancing on the lagoon, and on the sands, and on the shimmering breast of the hills beyond. A bright summer day! In sooth, saith the Eye. But Gooseflesh knows better.

Above the two irrepressible voices, however, rose strange music-like sounds, the strangest of all the circulating abominations of that day. I forget the north wind and the poet as I opened one of the blinds and saw what stood in the street below. It was the hurdy-gurdy of Jeddah without the hurdy-gurdy—only the human portion of it—the most fantastic, the most comically constructed instrument of ambulating music I had ever seen. The man was a Takruri black, a roly-poly of spotted and cracked flesh, bare-headed, bare-footed, bare-breasted, with a pate like a pumpkin, big bulging eyes, and teeth as white as snow in the sun. He wore a few white and blue rags put together and tied up by a piece of rope around his waist. From this rope hung little round bells; and around his legs was a contrivance of brass tubes, tied with straps, containing pebbles. He carried a broken sword in one hand and a stick with an only string attached to it in the other. This was his lute, to which he applied the sword. The result was atrocious. But when he accompanied it with a dance, swinging his hips to achieve a round effect, it became excruciatingly, diabolically funny. After the performance he sang the praise of the Prophet in accents that sounded like scratches of potsherds on brass; and holding his hand up for the coin, he smiled radiantly whether it was given or not. More than a hurdy-gurdy, indeed; it was the Takruri circulating band of Jeddah that stopped beneath my window that day. And it went on, a circulating boon!

But dreading more circulating boons, which fall upon you, if you are stationary, with a crushing weight, I decided, in order to reduce the effect, to circulate myself.

I had a letter of introduction from a book-lover in Cairo to a book-lover in Jeddah, which I had to deliver because it was more than a letter of introduction. It opened, after the peace and blessing of Allah, with these words : 'Forget not, O beloved one, the white doves of Mecca, which thou didst promise many moons ago to send us that Cairo too might hear them praise Allah and the Prophet.'

He further urged the matter upon me by saying : 'Prowl in the house of Sheikh Muhammad, and loiter in his garden, and steal if necessary. The white doves of Mecca are a sacred treasure, a precious possession.'

I went out, therefore, with a manifold purpose, seeking among other things the book-lover and the white doves. Jeddah did not seem new to me. I felt that I had been there before, not with Burton or Burckhardt, however, but with one who had preceded them by about a thousand years. Ibn Jubair of Granada, who made the pilgrimage to Mecca when Saladin, the mighty and good, was on the throne, is a chronicler of accuracy and courage. His book is still considered the best of its kind ; for his description of the Kaaba, the Mosque, and the Holy Places, as well as the ceremonies of the Hajj, which remain till this day the same, is graphic and vivid and accurate. His style is lucid and flowing ; and his freedom of opinion is admirable.

The Andalusian Arabs did not tolerate anything that shackled the mind and spirit. They had the courage of their convictions—they were protestants. Like the pilgrims that crossed the Atlantic eight centuries later, they also had fled from the tryanny of princes and kings. If, therefore, the Jeddah of those days was a den of thieves who preyed upon the pilgrims, and if the high-road to Mecca was held by bands of the Bedu who took from the pious multitudes what the Jeddah thieves had overlooked, Ibn Jubair said so in plain Arabic and protested to high heaven against the rank irreligion that nested in the Holy Places of Al-Islam.

I do not know how much irreligion is still nesting in the

dark and cobwebbed corners of Mecca and Al-Medinah ; but the den of thieves and the Bedu bandits were not in evidence. The pilgrimage, in these happy days of Husein the First, Sherif and King, was comparatively safe. But the Jeddah of Ibn Jubair, with this exception, had not changed. The same five-story houses with their attractively walled roofs for summer nights ; the same narrow winding streets, which in places enable the housewives, through their balconies in opposite buildings, to borrow things from each other or to pull each other's hair ; the same woodsheds in the markets and bazaars to shut out the fierce Arabian sun ; the same squares and camels and *shaqdoufs* (litters) for the transportation of the pilgrims ; [1] the same hodge-podge of humanity which Al-Islam brings together from every corner of the earth ; the same barefooted, half-naked Arabs carrying their only heritage of power and grandeur—a sword ; the same winds that beat Jeddah one day on the right cheek and one day on the left, the sword notwithstanding ; the same fruits and vegetables that Wadi Fatemah yields to a frugal population ; the same watermelons whose delicious quality raised Ibn Jubair to poetic heights of description—they are all still here.

Even the balconies seem to have gone through a thousand years of wind and rain and sun. They are mostly of teak unpainted wood, become drab, and of varying degrees of crudeness and artistic finish—from the simple window with a sort of fence in lattice, in front of its lower half, for the privacy and seclusion of the harim, to the most elaborate designs, artistically conceived and executed with beautiful carvings in the stalactites of the balconies such as one sees in the mosques of Cairo. Between the two are many crude and exquisite examples of the individuality of the Oriental that revels in detail. The temperament of the people and their soul are revealed in this phase of their architecture. On the surface there is equality in chaos—

[1] They now make the pilgrimage by motor car.

rich and poor alike bedraggled by time—a plain balcony almost falling and a beautiful ancient one with a patch in it of last year's timber, both rubbing elbows on the same conglomerate, ramshackle block: but behind them all are degrees of convention. While they all conform to a certain tradition, everybody does so in his own way, and according to his means.

There are but a few things in the Jeddah of to-day which Ibn Jubair did not see; as the condenser, for instance, which takes the salt out of the sea water for the sake of the Europeans and a few of the sophisticated modern Arabs. Also the tables and chairs in the cafés—and the flies! Yes, there are stivy dens in Jeddah, where the beduin might rattle his sword for a drink of uncondensed water, where a city tramp might doze over a *narghilah*, and where Takruri blacks, the porters of the town, are seen stretching their weary limbs and listening to the *hammal* gossip of the day.

Through a street thus adorned, which Ibn Jubair would have called The Street of the Flies, I made my way seeking the book-lover the Sheikh Muhammad. And I met them all, the friends of Ibn Jubair—the beduin in a rag and the *saiyed* in a silk *coftan*; and the Muslems from Ind and Iran; and the Faithful from Java and Turkestan; and the camels of the morning caravan; and the white donkeys that ran, upsetting the tray and pan of the grocer and confectionery man; and the naked Takruri carrying an oil can, full of water for the bath of my lady Juman or the cook of mylord Othman; and the fierce-looking chieftain of the clan; and the dandy of Jeddah 'sporting' a fan; and the moonstruck lover, sorrowful and wan—O thou Ibn Jubair, they are all still here. And among them is one whom I do not think thou hast seen. He too is thin and wan, and wears a silk *coftan*; but he carries a book! instead of a fan.

My friend the book-lover, I said to myself, and I raised my hand to my head and made salaam. He stopped and smiled and did likewise.

'Thou art the Sheikh Muhammad, the book-lover of Jeddah?' I asked.

'I am a book-lover, praise be to Allah,' he replied, 'but I have not the honour and good fortune of being the Sheikh Muhammad.'

A camel just then brushed by and snorted at us. He took the hint and moved from the centre of the street, taking me by the arm.

'Thou art a scholar,' I pursued, in a bold American manner.

'I read in the books,' he confessed modestly, 'and try to learn something of the secret of life and death. And thou, art thou of the land of the Arabs?'

'I have not the honour and good fortune,' I said, as we walked together to the house of Sheikh Muhammad. 'I come from a country where they make books for the delectation of the young girl, and where people have ceased to worry about the secret of life and death.'

'And what do they worry about, I pray thee?'

'Their latest worry is that which has been prohibited thirteen hundred years ago by the Prophet, the Peace of Allah upon him.'

'And what is that?'

I was glad we had reached the house of the Sheikh Muhammad, for I was not travelling in the interest of Prohibition.

The reverend Sheikh, a portly and dignified gentleman in a huge white turban, a blue silk caftan and a black jubbah, laid down the *narghilah* tube as my kind young guide entered and came to meet us at the door. He led us into a room which was apparently his library, and up to a carpeted diwan, between six beautifully carved cases of teak wood with glass doors, full of books. The binding is modest and uniform—a black cloth with the title on the back in gold. The *narghilah* of the Sheikh Muhammad and his rugs are more imposing to the travelling eye. He ordered a smoke for me as he opened the letter I had presented.

But while he read, his face gleamed and gloomed, his brows met alternately and separated, and I could see, as he folded the epistle, a tear in his eye. He kissed the envelope and placed it in his bosom. 'The Sheikh Hasan,' he said, 'is the highest example of nobility and worth among men. But I invoke the forgiveness of Allah—either he misunderstood or I did not make myself clear about the doves. Life of the Prophet! their case is a marvel—a miracle they are of the creation of the Most High. They are always singing his praise. "Allah is great, Allah is great!" they always sing. But they are not from Mecca. The name of honour was given to them by one of the Grand Sherifs who was fond of titles. They are from Al-Yaman and I have written to have a few of them transported to the beloved Sheikh Hasan in Cairo.'

A black slave brought in a *narghilah*, the like of which I had not seen before. The water vessel is of beautifully designed brass set on a tripod, with a stem, more than two feet high, of carved wood on which rests a fancy bowl, veiled in silver chains and beads hanging from its rim, containing the tobacco which they call *jarak* [1] and the burning coals. The tube, made of rich material and covered for protection with linen, is about ten feet long. Here is the pink of luxury in the East. The *narghilah* was followed with unsweetened coffee flavoured of cardamom, and then green tea, and then sweetened hot milk served in wine glasses, and then soda water of different colours, the black slaves continuing to come and go till I had risen to take my leave.

Meanwhile, there were visitors, a few of whom accepted the invitation to the diwan, while the others, in a modern practical manner, remained standing. And they asked the Sheikh Muhammad astounding questions.

'Did you receive the book of the English Lady who

[1] The *jarak*, a word imported from India, is Persian tobacco cured, that is, soaked in a decoction of honey or molasses and musk and ambergris and some spices—plug tobacco?

described the English Court and Nobility?' (meaning the *Memoirs of Margot Asquith*, which had been recently translated into Arabic).

'Is it true that the men of science of America have discovered that the rays of the sun are crooked?'

'Give me, of your kindness, the name of the historian who opened his history of the world with the biography of the devil.'

'I pray thee, O Sheikh Muhammad, have you in your wonderful library the book of the English philosopher who spoke the truth about the Prophet, the peace of Allah upon him, and praised Al-Islam?'

The benignant Sheikh Muhammad, the living encyclopedia of Jeddah, would answer in his habitual calm each question, taking out a book now and then to refresh his memory or confirm his opinion, and allowing the inquirers, the thirsters for knowledge, to take the books home if they desired. A few of them did so; a few others brought with them the books they had taken previously.

'Does the learned Sheikh,' I asked, 'lend out his books?'

'Not to everybody, O esteemed one, but to those only who prove to us that they have a thirst for knowledge.'

'What is the proof that mylord the Sheikh exacts?'

'They come to this diwan and participate in the discussions, which reveal, of a certainty, the quality of their minds. I am proud of every one to whom Allah in his bounty has enabled me to lend a book. And they all take good care of the books they borrow. Look, for instance, at this one; it has been out for the tenth time, and it is still new.'

The book he showed me was Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship*, an excellent Arabic translation, by the way, in which most of the idiomatic humour of 'Thammis' is faithfully reproduced in Arabic dress. The Hero as Prophet, which he has chosen to complete his cycle and add another string to his peculiarly conceived and strangely constructed spiritual Harp, is not having the right effect

among Muhammadans. It humours the ignorance of the many and confirms the learned few in their perversity. Had Carlyle had access to Ibn Jubair, or had he taken the trouble to acquaint himself with the present state of Al-Islam, he would have added to the Hero as Prophet a chapter on the quackery of mechanical religion.

Even the most learned Sheikh Muhammad admired unreservedly the book, accepted it as Gospel, or rather Koranic, truth. He was curious to know more about this philosopher of the English ; and to my story of a visit to the house in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, they all listened with wrapt attention. The double wall in the attic amused them. ' Had he come to live here amongst us,' said one, ' we would have invoked the great Allah to silence even the simoom for his sake.'

' Did he lend out his books ? ' asked the Sheikh Muhammad, combing with his fingers his trimmed white beard.

I spoke of our public libraries in reply. ' We also have what we call circulating libraries, which lend out books for a period of time to the young girls and the young men who thirst for knowledge—and for thrills.'

While one of those present was asking what I meant by thrills—it is perturbing, the thrill—not good for the soul—my host was repeating to himself, ' The young girls too ! '

He asked for more details about the circulating library system, intending, I suppose, to improve his own.

' The circulating library is an excellent name,' said one of the guests.

' By Allah ! ' exclaimed another, who dropped his *narghilah* tube in excitement, ' we shall call it the circulating library of Jeddah.'

' Yea, O most worthy Sheikh Muhammad,' said the third, who moved his turban back and forth to air his shaven skull, ' henceforth, it shall thus be called. We thank thee, O honourable one, for this noble idea.'

When I got up to go, my host recalled that I had come to him recommended by his worthy and beloved friend the

Sheikh Hasan of Cairo, and he asked me to be his guest during my stay in Jeddah. He also placed his library at my disposal.

'Here is the Index. Please take it with you and glance over it. There may be a book among this small collection of the slave of your virtue which you may desire to read.'

I asked if he had one on Al-Yaman, and he pointed to a few in the Index.

He was very pleased, for the sake of his friend in Cairo and the white doves of Mecca, to know that I was going to that part of Arabia.

'I will give you a letter to my friend there to deliver to you the doves. You will be charmed with their singing.'

CHAPTER VI

ON THE ROAD TO MECCA

EARLY in the morning we got into the King's motor car—the Ameer Zeid, the Foreign Minister Sheikh Fouad, the Sherif Ali, Chief of the Harb Bedu, Constantine Yanni of the Aviation Department and I. But no one knew where we were going except the last mentioned of the party and the first. The Ameer Zeid, the night before, had imparted to me the secret and thus deprived me of sleep. On the wings of magic, like Hasan of Basrah, I travelled far, leaving a virgin footprint in the most sacred precinct of Al-Islam. For has it once happened before what was to happen on the morrow?

The servants and the guards who were packed into another car—a German spoil of war—were sent ahead of us; and an hour later, driving through the northern gate, past the market outside the city wall, and into the Jeddah plain, we were on the ancient and present highway to Mecca. The horizon in the East, about seven miles away, is a half-circle of hills, soft in expression, modest in gesture, behind which in the distance rises the rugged peaks of At-Taief.

In twenty minutes we had traversed the plain, passed Rughamah, the first café on the road, and winding our way through a pass, we were among the hills. Then spoke the Ameer Zeid: 'What matters it? Let us tell them. The Sherif Ali will lose his job if he speaks; Sheikh Fouad is entrusted with greater secrets of State; and Costine (Constantine Yanni), thou wilt not betray a fellow

Christian. . . . Yes, we are going to Mecca, *billah*! for the sake of Ameen—the Ameer Ameen Khan from India —and no one need say a word about it.'

To Mecca, smuggled in a motor car. This was indeed a novelty, the first adventure of its kind by a Christian traveller. I need not dwell on my joy of that day, although I preferred to be on a camel, one of a caravan—a *hajji* Abdullah (Burton) or a *hajji* Ibrahim (Burckhardt), a pilgrim among pilgrims. But that has been done before ; and while the deception was still possible, it was not in my case necessary. Nor was it for that matter void of danger. On the contrary, there were four others inculpated with me ; and when in moments of conscience, as we motored through the hills, I contemplated my action—the willingness to let four companions share the responsibility with me—I felt a preference in sooth for the ancient deception.

But behold, the ancient caravan—the first century saluting the twentieth. We meet with many of them on the road to Mecca. From Java and Sumatra, from India and Afghanistan, from Morocco and the African wilds, they seek the fountain of eternal life and bliss. Colour and race and rank, like the distance of land and sea, yield to the supreme purpose, make the world of the pilgrim move in a common faith toward a goal unique, a shrine in the desert. And only a cup of brackish water has Mecca to offer to the pious and weary—brackish water, indeed, but from the Well of Zamzam—the well of eternal life and bliss.

At Yambo' and Jeddah they land in multitudes of shifting squalor and picturesqueness. From every ship a scene, from every land a fashion. The Takruri black, a giant with a rag around his loins ; the fastidious Somali in a florid gingham apron and a white toga ; the Javanese with their unveiled women in short skirts of gorgeous colours or just a piece of rich material clinging to their stunted forms ; the gentlemen from India, in graceful folds of silk and cashmere, travelling third class with the

multitude ; the *fellah* of Egypt in red slippers and a blue *jullabiyah* ; the Trans-Caucasian in a huge turban crowning a truculency of aspect unassuaged ; and the Moroccan, graceful and stately and proud, in the ample folds of an immaculate white burnous—they are all brought together in the most democratic spirit by the faith that was born in the wilds of Al-Hijaz. *Zamzam*ward the caravan moves ; but we ' motor ' out and get stuck in the sand.

Across the desert, through the Najd hills and the Great Nufoud, they come from Persia and Arabistan, from Bukhara and Baghdad, in caravans that link the plateau with the plain and the desert with the hills. The leader gives the word—a gun is fired—woh-haw !—the sun is setting—we start ! And the camels grunt and guggle and growl ; and the pilgrims, after the sunset prayer, jam and huddle and clamour for attention ; and the copper utensils rattle in the pack ; the sword of the Arab clatters at his side against his water can ; and the old sheikh rates the impatient one for pulling in the tangle at his sleeve and beads ; thus the caravan, slowly and tumultuously composed, moves to the tinkling of bells and the squeaking of saddles and the rhythmic cry of ALLAH, ALLAH ! It slowly moves into the dusk and soon out of it, in a generous moon, towards the Holy City. The caravan slowly rolls the desert spaces ; but we spin in a car and—get stuck in the sand.

Down the Syrian steppes and the lava-strewn waste they come, huddled in the cattle cars of the Hijaz Railway ; the engine puffing at its steam ration of war days ; wheezing, coughing, snorting, uttering sibillants of despair ; stopping for hours between stations, for a day and a night ; waiting for Allah knows what at station points —the regular soldiers have something to do, perhaps, with the beduin bands—and filling the poor wilted, dazed crumpled-up hajji with such longing for a camel, such visions of caravans moving in the moonlight to rhythms of

devotion and delight, as only Allah in his mercy can assuage. But marvel of constancy!—they reach Al-Medinah with the same faith, undiminished and unadulterated, that moved them from home.

But Jeddah is still the main gateway to the Kaaba—the same ancient Jeddah that was cursed by the pilgrims of Granada for its harbour, which for two miles is a tangle of reefs and shoals; for its water, which, when found, is more precious than ottar of roses; for its trade-people who were more mercenary in those days than the infidels of Aragon and Castille; for its *motawwifin* (guides) who were as rapacious as the Berbers of Africa, and for the beduin bands, waiting outside the Mecca-gate. Exciting times they had, those pilgrims of old. Even up to the last days of the Turk, before the Husein era of independence and the fear of the Most High was inaugurated, the pilgrim's faith was still subject to such spite as only Iblis could conceive. But the pilgrim withstood and endured; he came out of the fire of Al-Hijaz, moreover, pure and whole, and laden with grace divine.

The caravans go forth in the peace and security of Allah, and we, for the third time, get stuck in the sand. We had debouched into another plain surrounded with hills, not higher than those we had passed, and lo, the other *trombile*, as the Bedu call the motor car, was ahead of us, waiting apparently for us. No: it was stuck, like our own, in the sand. We got out of our rut, thanks to the strong arms of Yanni and the Ameer Zeid and the goodwill of Sheikh Fouad and myself, and went to its rescue. A few of the Bedu had gathered around it and were making a feeble effort to push it ahead. The chauffeur was still at the wheel, and we exerted of our strength, moaning like the rest and invoking Allah. Depend on Allah! But the German *trombile* was in no humour for a spin. It snorted, whirred for a moment, and stopped again. Something more than sand was the matter.

Meanwhile, a multitude of the Bedu had gathered,

coming from no particular direction I could see. But there they were—strange apparitions!—wafted suddenly before us. Like certain animals, they take the colour of their surroundings, appearing and disappearing unobserved. And all in picturesque rags, and all armed. Not one have I seen without a *bundoq* (short for *bunduqiyah*= gun). They recognized the Ameer Zeid, of course, but their first salaam was to the Sherif Ali, their ruler, or the liaison officer, as it were, between them and the Government. Some among them acted in the capacity of what may be called rural police; but there was nothing to distinguish them from their fellows except a band—the band of authority—upon their arms. Also their laziness. They directed the operation, but would not help; and when we decided to abandon the German *trombile*, they praised Allah.

The Ameer Zeid ordered the lunch baskets to be moved into our car and told the servants to shift for themselves. We passed between two lines of the Bedu, some standing at arms of their own volition, others pigeon-toed gaping into space, still others squatting; and not long after we had tried to make up for lost time did we stop again. I thought someone had fired at us. But we were passing through a volcanic region, that section of the country being strewn with lava stones, and a scabrous flint cut the tyre two inches across. The Hindu chauffeur, eminently efficient, was not long, however, in making the change.

A curious sand phenomenon is the white irregular border which one sees at the foot of the hills in the distance. It glows in the sunshine, looking like snow; and above it the haze, like a filmy cloud, crowns the summits and completes the illusion. To me it was a pleasant sight—the sight of snow in the desert, in Al-Hijaz. But the illusion nestled at the foot of the hills only, and is thus explained. The Hijaz is a country of violent winds, which blow the sand against the hills, pile it at the base up to a certain height; and when the sun shines upon this white

ON A PILGRIM SHIP.

Pilgrims land at Yambo' to go to Medinah or at Jeddah to go to Mecca.

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sand it makes it seem whiter in the glow. Then above it and above the haze the hills present a variety of hues which are due at times to atmospheric conditions, and at others to the nature of the soil. For there are many mineral veins and stones of many colours in Al-Hijaz ; white marble with a tinge of green or with a vein of brown, light and dark ; slate of red and grey ; brown stone the colour of clotted blood ; greenish granite ; black flint ; and quartz of different shades. A barren soil, otherwise, and more barren hills. Only shrubs of the *athl*, a few *salam* trees, and a bush whose leaves are like the oleander's, did we meet on the way. Where there is grass, it is mostly of the *dharam*, which the Bedu wind into long plaits and send it dry to the city market.

We passed by the principal station, midway between Jeddah and Mecca, where the pilgrims stop for coffee and a smoke, and sometimes rest overnight. It is a street of tents made of straw or brushwood or timber, while here and there is a café built of stone. There are tables and chairs, and settees of rush or rope which the rich pilgrims may use as beds. But most of them sleep in the open on the sand. The name of the place, Bahrah (lake in Arabic), is supposed to be derived from the fact that there was once a lake in the vicinity. Not long ago, in a geographical sense, was this ; for near this lake, it is supposed again, lived the famous monk of Bohairah, who, it is also supposed, put Muhammad's son Abdullah on the path of prophecy. But there are no traces in Bahrah to-day of either monkery or lake.

At Hadda, the next station from Bahrah, the King has a palm grove, and his tenants, meeting us at the gate, led us through to a spreading acacia tree, under which they had constructed diwans and spread them with carpets. Evidently they had been ordered to do the honours ; for they told us that His Majesty had telephoned twice to find out if we had arrived. He was worrying about us. But he knew that even his best car has to be pushed and pulled

out of the sand more than half a dozen times between Mecca and the sea.

'Can you not get your people to clear this place of the sand?' asked the Ameer Zeid of one of the Arabs, at whose tent we stopped for water. 'You are the Chief here, and you should get your men to work.' The Chief replied: 'They worked once, *billah*! and the *aziab* (south wind) brought the sand back. If you can stop the *aziab*, we'll work again, *billah*!'

After we had eaten the dinner of rice and lamb, which was set on a mat under the acacia tree, and taken our coffee, the Sherif Ali drew the Ameer Zeid aside to confer with him about the Ameer Ameen Khan of India. We then walked through the palm grove and out to the desert, following a small stream, whose water is tepid and a bit brackish, and at whose head, near the foot of the hill, are the remains of a curious irrigation system of old. The land that was irrigated was, it seems, of different levels; and to bring it all under water, three channels, one above the other, were built underground, leading from the spring. The little square cistern built around the spring is about ten feet deep, but there was only two feet of water in it at that time; and in the two opposite walls are circular openings in three rows above each other leading into three separate channels. So, when the lowland was to be irrigated the water went through the lower ducts; and when the land of highest level needed the water, the four ducts beneath the last two were closed. A similar method was employed by the Arabs in Andalusia.

When I remarked about this to the Ameer Zeid, he said: 'Where were the Arabs of Andalusia in those days, and where are we now? There are deserts between us and their achievements, just as there are seas between us and Europe. The curse of the country, O Ameen, is the Bedu, and the camel is a calamity. The Bedu and the camel are enemies of progress. We cannot as much as run an autobus between Jeddah and Mecca because of the Bedu.

'We and our camels will die of hunger, they say. That is true. But the sooner they die the better. I would kill off all the camels and give the Bedu spades instead of guns.'

We were on our way back to the grove, where the tenants of the King, who received us at the gate, were sleeping under the palms. I doubt whether this generation of Bedu, armed with spades instead of guns, could do much to attract progress to Arabia. They are savages in the *gazu* (raid, foray); and at all their other occupations they are children, seeing only with their eyes, doing only with their hands, and for their day only, their present hour! Much of this child-nature, however, is admirable; especially so is their childlike curiosity.

We saw two Arabs, as we entered the grove, two grown-ups, watching something under the scrub palm and speaking with animation. 'They are flirting,' said one. 'There be something more between them,' said the other. My own curiosity was aroused, and as I approached them, they pointed to the scene under the palm, one of them addressing himself to me. 'They are not flirting,' he said; 'they are quarrelling.' What I saw, astounded and amused, were two beautiful birds with yellow plumes, like canaries, but without their gift of song; and of a truth, they were quarrelling. Grimly and silently, they picked at each other, pursued each other with anger, flew at each other, and even, for a moment, grappled in mid-air. An interesting fight it was; but more interesting was the audience, the two Arabs who watched the two birds until they had separated, each flying in a different direction. 'A bad wife,' said the one, 'she has left him.' 'She will come back to him,' said the other nonchalantly; 'he gave her a good beating.'

Two other birds of black and white plumage and an Arab boy in rags were gleaning where we had our luncheon. But the birds hopped away, and the boy stood up and salaamed when we arrived. A boy with a remarkable face, bright piercing eyes, dishevelled hair, and a stick in his

hand. He was fascinatingly wild. We spoke to him. He did not know his father, nor his mother. He slept in the *khala*, the open, and lived on the crumbs he picked up in and around the tents. 'And don't you steal?' this from Ameer Zeid. 'No, by thy life!' he replied. 'Nor I, nor my tribe.' He also defended his tribe. 'And why do you carry a stick?' 'And have I no right to carry a stick? Am I not of the Arabs?' (Every one of the Bedu carries a stick of some sort—a switch, a staff, a club.) The Ameer gave him some coins, which he tied up in a corner of his sleeve; and to a remark about thieves he replied by shaking his stick.

We woke up the tenants to give them their *bakshish*; and as we walked out of the grove about fifty of the Bedu, with a few soldiers among them, stood at attention outside the gate. They had gathered there in our honour. But one old man, a sinister-looking one, who stood apart, came up to the car, and, looking the Ameer Zeid in the face, stretched out his hand. More like a dagger thrust was the gesture, and it was not, to be sure, for salaam. It was for money. His looks said so, but not in a begging manner. The Arabs seldom beg, are not accustomed to begging. They as much would say even to a king: Come forth with the tribute. But the Ameer only offered his hand, which the Arab barely touched with his fingers; and enveloping the *trombile* with a maleficent eye, as if he would put it and its occupants under a magic spell, he went away in dudgeon.

The *trombile* nevertheless moved, but not towards Mecca. Was I the only one then that was to suffer from that evil eye? Were my hopes, my expectations, my golden dream to be knocked into smithereens by a beduin glance? I looked at the Ameer Zeid in silent astonishment as we drove back towards Bahrah. The Ameer is a prepossessing youth. Considering his age alone, to say nothing of his charm of character, one is inclined to forgive him many things. But I was in no mood of forgiveness at that time.

He had robbed me of a night's sleep, aroused the most glowing of my hopes, and without explanation or apology he cancelled his plan. Might not my apparent ingratitude be therefore forgiven? Despite the Sherif Ali's honeyed wisdom—he was older than the Ameer and was not inclined to daredevilry—and Sheikh Fouad's diplomacy and logic, I was all the way, like the old man with the evil eye, in sullen dudgeon.

The distractions of the road, however, were irresistible—and mutual. The *trombile* was not only an attraction, but also a source of terror and alarm to man and beast. It was amusing to see a child jump off his donkey and dash out from the road, he running in one direction, the donkey in another. It was pathetic to see a terror-stricken camel jump out of the file, dragging the whole caravan with it across the field, upsetting *shaqdoufs* and burdens, and giving the riders a jostling and unforgettable moment. We all laughed and epigramatized. 'Ignorance in flight,' Sheikh Fouad exclaimed, 'ignorance routed by science!' 'And here is science in the dumps,' said I, as we passed by the other *trombile*, which was still stuck in the sand; but two camels in a harness were then tugging at it. Which gave the Ameer Zeid his cue. 'And here is ignorance,' he said, 'helping science out of its plight.'

CHAPTER VII

THE DANCE

WHEN King Husein learned of what had happened on our trip to Hadda, he was much grieved. But he would make reparation, as he said, for the damage done to my dream. The folly of it, the shame of it. He himself would never subject a fond hope to cruelty, grave or gay. A dream is not a *dhob* to play with. A dream is not a Government minister upon whom to crack the whip of thy wit. A dream is the gazelle of the heart, and gazelles in Arabia have the desert for joy. 'Yea, what were a gazelle, O dear one, without its desert freedom? We Arabs do not capture the gazelle, much less torture it. But Zeid is a boy, and weak-witted.'

His Majesty was in sooth indignant and much grieved. But the deed was done; and while he could not perform a miracle to bring my 'gazelle' back to life, he would administer a soothing potion, he would opiate my grief. To which end he called his Stamboul cooks, and then whispered a word in the ear of the Sherif Ali.

On the following day, about noon, one of the Palace slaves came to say, *Saiyedna* desires thee. I went to the *majlis* on the second floor, where His Majesty was alone waiting for me; but no sooner had I salaamed and sat down than he got up, and, taking me by the hand, led me to the floor below. And there was a royal surprise—a banquet at which sat forty of the dignitaries of Mecca and Jeddah. They stood up when we entered, His Majesty still leading me by the hand; and when we took our seats

they remained standing until the royal gesture was given. The table was more suggestive of Ritz than of Arabia ; but when the order was given, the tall black slaves, most imposing in their white robes, red and blue sashes, and gold-woven *ighals*, came in carrying solemnly in both hands, much as a priest would carry the eucharist, tureens of china ware. Alas, it was neither a European nor an Arab banquet. But it might have been in New York in this era of grace, as it was without an introduction or an epilogue, and without an accompaniment of any kind, white or red or effervescent. We started with a vermicelli soup, ended with a dessert of canned pineapples, and quenched our thirst with the desalted water of the sea.

Between the beginning and the end, however, there was many a spiced dish, particularly that of the King's quaint wit, which made us—a few cosmopolites and myself—forget the drinks. The two Ministers of Fear, the ample target of His Majesty's humour, were seated opposite him, to the right and to the left of the Ameer Zeid ; and there were forty of the dignitaries of Al-Hijaz, all graduates of the Stamboul school of sycophancy, who could sit arms folded throughout the banquet and then praise Allah and His Majesty for a hearty meal. Some of them did nothing else as far as I could see. Others I heard lauding the eggplant which the King had praised, and then His Majesty cracked the joke. 'But the eggplant,' he said, 'always leaves a bitter taste in the mouth.' 'Of a certainty, *ya Saiyedna*, the eggplant is very bitter, has naught of good in it.' Whereupon, he turned to me with a significant look in which I could read, *Seest thou how well they are trained*?

But the Bedu know not the fawning oil. They say, Nay, and they say, Yea, with the same abruptness, the same brusqueness and candour ; and when they meet the King on the road or in the streets of the city, they still salute him with *marhaba* (welcome), O Husein. One of them with a petition in his hand, once stopped him at the city gate.

'Go to the Government,' said His Majesty. 'But my petition,' replied the beduin, 'is against the Government.' He was therefore asked to come to the Palace. That is why methinks the Hadhramout Minister and the Poet-Minister do not like the Bedu. They speak not and behave not with good grace. Moreover, neither for love nor money would they serve the Government. Of a certainty, they take the money of the Government, and levant, while he, the gentleman from Hadhramout, is managing for love, and love alone, the finances of the infant Hashemite State. Several others of his colleagues served King Husein without pay and were willing withal to be the butt of his humour.

Before His Majesty was a bottle of piccalilly from which he took a red pepper, cut it in half, and offered a piece each to the Ministers across the table. A royal favour, which, in this case, must also be eaten. Sheikh Ahmad the Finance Minister held it in his mouth and waited, while it was doing its work, for an opportunity to get rid of it. Sheikh Fouad the Foreign Minister bit off a bit and was in a worse state. The King kept his eyes upon both, who could no longer eat nor speak; and to his question, Is it hot? Sheikh Ahmad pursed his lips and whistled. But Sheigh Fouad had the courage to turn his head and apply the napkin to his mouth. 'Now I can answer the question of *Saiyedna*.' 'You have already done so,' said the King, laughing heartily, 'Take a piece of water-melon.' And then to me: 'Did he not speak as if he had a hole in his tongue?' Sheikh Ahmad, too, when the King turned towards me, did as Sheikh Fouad and sputtered of his torture. '*Ya Saiyedna*, a hole made by a red hot skewer cannot be worse.' His Majesty offered him a piece of water-melon, saying: 'Hold it in your mouth; it will absorb the pepper, it will extinguish the fire. . . . Now tell us, O Sheikh Ahmad, what would you do if we put you in an aeroplane and gave you a pepper to eat?' To which Sheikh Ahmad, in a piping voice: '*Ya Saiyedna*,

ya Mowlana, Allah lengthen thy days, thou wouldst not be thus cruel to thy slave.'

'And if we gave you a choice of one of the two?'

'I would eat all the pepper in that bottle, by the grace of Allah, rather than ride in a thing satanic.'

The grilling of Sheikh Ahmad at noon that day was only a prelude to what was to follow in the evening. I said that His Majesty, when he called his Stamboul cooks, whispered also a word in the ear of Sherif Ali. That word had in it the potentiality of an entertainment which was destined to surpass all suchlike that followed in my Arab travels. At noon a European banquet, in the evening an Arab supper followed by a dance. Here was atonement by the father for the sins of the son; an ample reparation, indeed, for the damage done to my dream of visiting the Kaaba.

An hour before sunset we got into motor cars, the Ameer Zeid, Sheikh Ahmad and I riding with the King. A dozen officials were packed into another car, and more than that number followed on horseback. We drove out along the coast to Ruwais, which is about three miles north of Jeddah, and stopped in front of two open tents, outside the town, facing the sea. From the flag poles flew the Arab flag, and between them were torches stuck in the sand. We entered the first tent, which was spread with carpets, and opposite each other, on either side, were two camel saddles, the traditional leaning pillows in a beduin's booth of hair, covered with black sheep skins. One of these was for His Majesty, the other for his guest.

The Bedu came in to say salaam, some of them kissing the King's hand, but not profusely as the citizens of Jeddah. Others saluted in the ancient manner of their ancestors, How art thou, O Husein? Allah greet thee, O Abu Ali.[1] And one from a tribe in the hills: 'We have a share in thee, O Abu Ali. Thou shouldst visit us also.' The Ameer Zeid held audience in the other tent,

[1] Father of Ali, who is the first-born of his sons.

where there was more freedom, and a spicy conversation.

A little before sundown a black slave brought two prayer rugs and spread them in the tent for the King. The voice of a muazzen outside, *La ilaha ill'Allah* ! though not particularly good, had at that hour and near the coast, a pious pleasantness. The horizon was a pale gold ; the hills behind us were veiled in delicate pink and blue, and all around was deep silence. We all stood up at the call of the muazzen, and the Ameer Zeid went to pray with his royal father. Some of the officials and Bedu, in a line behind them, joined in the prayer.

The Bedu, men and children, began to gather in groups, for seldom do they get an invitation to a supper and a dance. But I never could see where they came from. Like rabbits, they seemed to spring from holes in the ground. The children, some of whom had never seen the King before, were unabashed in their curiosity. His Majesty was pleased. ' Come, O my children, follow me.' They followed, eager and expectant, in the direction of the two *trombiles*, where they were packed by His Majesty's own hand, about fifteen in the one and fifteen in the other. And then to the chauffeur : ' Give them a ride.' Not one of those urchins, to whom a *trombile* was a mystery satanic, refused to ride. One of them afterwards was asked to the tent and questioned. ' Did you like it ? ' ' Aye, wallah.' ' Were you not afraid ? ' ' No, wallah ! ' ' Do you know how it runs ? ' ' By turning the wheel,' ' That is not enough ; come and see.' The Ameer Zeid turned the steering wheel, ' You see, it does not run.' But the boy would not be defeated ; and like every one of his race, he resorted to the last weapon in every argument, saying : ' By the help of Allah and when Allah willeth, it will run.'

Meanwhile, the grilling of Sheikh Ahmad had begun. A revolver was fired in front of him while he was smoking a *narghilah*, and he leaped out of the tent with the outcry

of a child who had seen a snake, upsetting the pipe and dragging the long tube behind him. Whereupon, some one cried, A snake ! And the poor man, seeing the tube in the dusk, believed what he had heard, and continued to run. I wonder what a nerve specialist would say about Sheikh Ahmad. Is the fear of unusual sounds to be attributed also to cowardice ? I was told that when he accompanied the King to an English cruiser visiting Jeddah, the sound of the guns in salute brought upon him a fever that kept him two weeks in bed. Nevertheless, they continued to torment him with a revolver, and he jumped terror-stricken from tent to tent, appealing to *Saiyedna* in vain. It was most pathetic, and I was sorry for His Excellency. But I was told afterwards that it was all done for my amusement. Alas ! that any one should be tortured for my amusement.

Of a certainty, Sheikh Ahmad was the happiest man in the party when the slaves called us to supper. Eight large metal vessels, each about six inches deep and two feet in diameter, filled with rice, on the top of which was a quarter of boiled lamb, were set in two rows on the sand from the King's tent down. Near each platter was a smaller vessel containing the rest of the lamb ; and around each set squatted a group of from ten to fifteen, who, as soon as they had finished, got up, giving place to others. Two sheikhs of the Bedu were with us of the King's party, and they were the first, after His Majesty, to tuck their sleeves and fall to. It was a silent and solemn performance ; strenuous, too, especially for one who was but a novice. Nevertheless, I tried, and gradually I was able to roll a ball of rice in the palm of my hand and send it, with the thumb like a spring behind it, to the right place. Not always did it go into the right place, however—not at the first performance. The lamb is managed with both hands, stripped from the bone, split into pieces, some of which the King would distribute as royal favours to his guests. No bread accompanies the *saliq*, as this Bedu meal is called ; but coffee and tea are

served, one after the other. The slaves then come with the aftabas and basins and we wash our hands.

After the King had done this, he took the Ameer Zeid aside. But I had wished that they would end the tragic-farce and let the Minister of Finance digest his meal in peace. They didn't. For the Ameer Zeid went out of the tent and, coming around to where His Excellency was sitting, dropped something around his neck. 'A snake, a snake!' cried out the poor man as he leaped to his feet; but when he saw that it was only a piece of rope, he turned to the King beseechingly. '*Ya Saiyedna, ya Mowlana*, would you be guilty of torturing the innocent? Will you not order them to stop—order them to be sensible?'

But the order of the Sherif Ali had rendered His Majesty's unnecessary. The fire had been lighted, about fifty feet away from our tent, and the musicians were warming their instruments—the tom-tom, the kettle drum and the *daff* (tambourine). The chief drummer had before him a large kettle drum and a small *durbakkah* (tom-tom); and he used drum sticks alternately on the one and the other. The tom-tom has a metallic, a flat sound; the drum is resonant, has shades of sounds like a bell. The two together and the two *daffs* composed the orchestra, which began with *trot-tot-tum* and for a while varied not. It was the call to the dance; and as the people gathered, the circle around the fire broke into a horseshoe, the ends of which, as the dance progressed, reached to the tent. It was a well staged performance, with a background of sea and star-spangled sky.

Trot-tot-tum! *trot-tot-tum*! and the horseshoe became larger and larger. Over two hundred of all ages and ranks, from the urchin of seven to the toothless one, from the sheikh to the roving beduin, from the sherif to the black slave, started the dance. Their smocks were of all colours —white, blue, red, yellow, brown, black—with sashes, of opposite shades, drawn wide over the hips and tied in a knot in front or at the side. Some wore *abas* of silk or

camel hair, others a sort of jerkin prettily embroidered, while others wore nothing over their smocks. The *ighal* was more conspicuous than the turban ; and he who came in sandals doffed them outside the circle. As the dance progressed, the more spirited dancers, the intense ones, doffed their head-dress also, throwing the *ighal* on the ground and their *sumadahs*, in a jaunty manner, on their shoulders.

Trot-tot-tum ! *Trot-tot-tum* ! with a hand and a catch for accompaniment. The dance begins—a very simple and fascinating dance. But what struck me most in it was the co-ordination—the clapping, the drum music and the singing were all so regulated, so harmonious—the result, one would say, of months of training and rehearsal. It was, I suppose, a sort of A B C which they all learn in childhood, and learn little or nothing else in after years. But can you get two hundred people, without a leader or directing head, to say A B C with such variety of tones, such spontaneity, and such co-ordination ? A *maître-de-ballet* could not have produced anything more perfect. There is, however, a directing tradition, which was not always or even regularly observed. Every one had to contribute in turn an individual expression to the general performance.

But to the stranger it seemed a free dance for all. The first thing one had to do was to get in line, join the semi-circle, and stamp with one foot the ground ; and then clapping, singing, too, he swayed a little to and fro. The swaying and the stamping of feet were not so perfect in time and rhythm as the clapping and singing. The next thing one might do, if the spirit moveth—for that is how it seemed—would be to leap into the centre and dance independently : a free, spontaneous and spirited performance it often was, developing into a fine abandon. The fact is, however, that the order, which is usually observed, is that some one at the end of the line first begins to dance apart, and then returns to his place, the one next

to him following. And so on till every one in the horseshoe had contributed an individual expression to the ensemble.

The song is seldom more than a few words, a sentiment or an expression of welcome, as, for instance, *Najjak Allah ya zein*, Allah protect thee, O pretty one.

Najjak Allah ya zein, ya zein,
Ya ho ya haaww, ya ho yaaa ho.

The singing rises as an overtone, linking one strophe of the music with another. Something like this :

Najjak Allah ya zein, ya zein,
Trot tot tot tum, trot tot tum tum tum.

The dance, like the music and the singing, has little or no variety. Nevertheless the one great rhythm works its spell upon you.

The step is simple but elusive ; striking in movement, fascinating in composition as well as in the effect of its rhythm. But when the dancer leaps into the centre, he does so with a bound, sometimes rising three or four feet in the air. I have seen some execute even a pirouette like the Russian dancers and then glide along. I say glide, because they seem to slide on one foot, while with the other, lifted high so that the knee is almost even with the waist, they stamp the ground, kicking the sand into a little cloud, and then bringing both feet together, they sway the body to and fro in a libidinous movement.

This is the unit of the dance. Two, or three or five at times, leap at once into the centre from different parts of the semi-circle. Some of them wearing plaited kirtles whirled as good as dervishes, even longer at a single spin ; but, to one coming from Europe, they were mundanely reminiscent. The dancing of the children, who occupied the two ends of the horseshoe, was amusing. It must have been, to some of them, the first lesson in the *raffaha*, as this dance of the Bedu of Al-Hijaz is called

Besides the individual performance, there is a group dance of eight or ten standing in two rows opposite each

other ; this being a form to which the women, when they are present, contribute. But they did not come that evening because of the King, who looks not upon such feminine performances with favour. The group dance is a combination of interlacing rhythms ; the bodies never meet—are always about two or three feet apart. But they sway towards each other and away from each other in a coquetting movement often suggestive of sex. The clapping, the kicking heel and the singing continue as usual, keeping time with the kettle drum ; while the ensemble, with groups at either end and solos in the centre, whirling like dervishes, bounding in the air, swaying languidly as though love-stricken, is as fascinating as a Russian ballet and as bewildering as a composition by Fokine.

People are bringing more wood to the fire ; the *daff*-player is warming his *daff* over the flame ; the children are waiting eagerly for the next dance to begin, and some one in the tent is slipping a salamander in the lap of Sheikh Ahmad. But his cry and his appeal are drowned in *Najjak Allah ya zein, ya zein* : tro tot tot tum trot tot tum tum tum. The dance is resumed. Two young men, one in a white skirt and red sash, the other in a blue smock and a girdle of saffron,—the former an Arab, the latter a Sudanese—enter slowly, step gracefully, each in one direction, and of a sudden turn towards each other, drawing their swords from their scabbards. They salaam and the sword-dance begins. The movement is alternately defiant and defensive, while the sword-play is very elusive, a sort of legerdemain. Nevertheless, it is an interpretative dance ; a duel, not between two men, but between man and woman, executed with the dexterity, the grace, and the finish of trained terpsichores.

I noticed that the blacks, of whom there was a considerable number, were quicker to react and freer to surrender themselves to the joy of the moment—more excitable were they, more demonstrative, more intense—ever feeding the heated blood, which evaporates in ecstasy and

abandon. But the Arabs are more graceful, more dignified ; and with a native decorum on such occasions, free withal from the straitlace of convention. Many of these people did not know each other ; but they had heard the beat of the drum and they came tripping to the dance, which is their language of fellowship and joy for a night. Indeed, they were still heaping brushwood on the fire and heating the kettle drum and the *daff*, when we got up at midnight to leave ; and not until the break of dawn did the dance cease. They had to stop then to say their morning prayer.

CHAPTER VIII

ORIGINALITY IN REFORM

'AUN UR-RAFIQ, uncle of King Husein and former Sherif of Mecca, was a man of wit and violence ; a philosopher with a smile and an axe ; a sarcastic, caustic, iconoclastic Arab. He refused to acknowledge, for instance, that pilgrims are people. Pilgrims are—pilgrims. But what matters if the Grand Sherif gives them the cold shoulder ? Allah and the Prophet will give them, of a certainty, a warm welcome in Al-Hijaz. The sun of Al-Hijaz ! thinkest thou that those who come to scald their sconces in it are people ? Thinkest thou, O most pious one, that those who come from the end of the earth to drink of the salt water of Zamzam, and smell the stenches of sacrifice at Mina, and burn in the Juhannam of 'Arafat, and starve in the streets of Mecca, and if they survive, go back with the germ of pestilence in their blood—thinkest thou that they are people ? They are pilgrims, O most pious one, and they deserve what they get.

And 'Aun ur-Rafiq was a descendant of the Prophet with Wahhaby tendencies. He could see no use in tombs, the tombs of *walis* (saints) especially, to which the widow and the barren wife and the half-naked half-witted Bedu repaired for divine assistance. The tomb of a *wali* is called a *maqam*, a shrine with a dome, of which there is a multitude in Al-Hijaz, and on which the facetious 'Aun pronounced judgment. Let the widow and the barren wife go to the right man, said he, and let the half-witted Bedu go to the Kaaba. Invoke Allah alone : the *walis*

are dead and cannot help. Every domed shrine was therefore doomed; and many of them were destroyed. The people groaned and moaned and appealed in vain. The Sherif 'Aun the *maqamo*clast would not hear, would not care. But when the agents of destruction, the hosts of a unitarian faith, arrived at Jeddah and stood with their spades before the greatest *maqam* in Al-Hijaz, in Arabia—in the whole world—which is the three-domed tomb of 'our mother Eve,' [1] the citizens of Jeddah, knowing that the Sherif would not hear their protests, appealed to the European Consuls. But what had the Consuls to do with a religious reform in Arabia? They asked themselves this question; and one of them, a man of genius, answered, We have much to do with it. Eve is neither a saint nor a Muslem woman: Eve is our mother as well as the Muslems'. The Consuls therefore took action, and the Sherif was amused. 'But think you,' he asked, 'that "our mother" was so tall? If the stupidity is international, let the tomb stand.'

But King Husein had a gentler wit and a milder method of reform. He was subtle and original. Without touching a tradition he modified, and often nullified, its evil. One of the marvellous features of the Hajj, for instance, was that some of the pilgrims, in an ecstasy of devotion, would throw themselves in the well of Zamzam, believing it to be the quickest and safest way to eternal bliss—a short-cut to Paradise. Now, King Husein did not say to them that this was a form of insanity, nor did he prevent them from indulging in it; but he had the well covered with an iron net.

That epidemics accompanied the Hajj in the past, even nested in the Holy Places, is a matter of common knowledge; and there was more than one or two or three reasons for it. King Husein saw one reason immediately

[1] It is sixty-five feet long with three domes, and in an enclosure, outside the city wall, containing other tombs. The women of Jeddah visit it every Thursday.

before him. The water ducts in Mina were open, and the pilgrims, who go there to stone the devil, do not give a thought to the microbe. They trample upon it, and throw it in the stream, and then, by drinking the water, put an end to it! To the pure all things are pure. Which His Majesty also repeated, and believed. But to cover the ducts is not irreligious, and a hydrant can work no evil. With a hydrant and iron pipes, therefore, did he combat the microbe in Mina.

Indeed, he has even gone so far as to establish hospitals and combat disease in a scientific manner. Of the two hospitals in the City of Mecca one is exclusively for the poor; but both have examination and operation rooms completely equipped, competent doctors and nurses, a drug department, and special wards for women and children as well as for the pilgrims. Thus the test of faith—the hardships and the sufferings and the disease which the pilgrims welcome and endure—is fast disappearing.

In a mild degree, however, it may still be found at Kamaran,[1] and at the island of Abu Sa'd. Nevertheless, King Husein thought that his Quarantine[2] is the best in the world. Moreover, the English at Kamaran were usurping, not only his rights, but also his own Arab islands. 'Let them come and see how well we can disinfect and how well we can care for the health of the pilgrims. They cannot be more solicitous about them, O dear one, than we are. . . . Our Quarantine is incomparable. Come and see with your own eyes.'

His Majesty clapped for the servant and ordered the launch. He was ever thus, with rarely a program for the day, but always sudden and surprising. An excellent method to keep the servants alert and the soldiers on guard; but it does not always succeed in Arabia. The launch! And in a few minutes, while every one in the Palace was in a flurry of preparation, a soldier came in to say that the

[1] The Red Sea Quarantine for those who come from the East.

[2] The Quarantine of Jeddah.

launch was ready. Nothing else was. His Majesty put his galoches on with his own hand and walked out without his black slaves, without his Secretary, and without uttering a word of dissatisfaction.

We were accompanied by the Ameer Zeid and the Minister of the Navy. In a few places, as we steamed out of the landing, the launch touched bottom and the sailors had to get out and punt. Whether in a motor car or a motor boat in the Hijaz we were sure to get stuck in the sand. Once we were in the open, however, the engine hummed, and in an hour we were at the Island of Abu Sa'd. The pilgrims, seeing the royal launch, crowded around the landing. The Turks in baggy trousers—souvenirs of the old regime—shouted at them and tried to drive them back. King Husein motioned, Nay, with his head and hand ; and as soon as he landed he was besieged by them.

They came rushing from every direction to kiss the royal hand. Not a word was spoken, not a voice was heard. Of all the pilgrims, the Javanese are the most welcome at Jeddah and the most liked ; for they are rich in piety and devotion, as well as in the things of the world. Moreover, they are the first to arrive and the last to depart. To them the pilgrim season is seldom short of six months—six months in the vicinity of Allah and the Prophet !—and they shed tears of sorrow when they leave.

They shed tears of joy too when they saw the Descendant of the Prophet. I have never seen such expression of reverence, of devotion, of ecstatic servility ; and as they crowded around this man, grovelling, bending, whining words of worship, they seemed at a loss how to bow or kneel. Those that fell on both knees kissed the hem of his robe, others rubbed their face against his shoes, others against his breast ; and having done, they withdrew, but not their gaze, and stood at a little distance with outstretched hands. More than King was he to them, and more than Sherif : they stood before a revelation, as it

were, a substantiation. The Prophet himself seemed to be patting their cheeks, their backs, their hands. I could see that the King was moved, and his words were few. He made no effort to free himself, but stood there the centre of the most extraordinary demonstration, the rarest human devotion ; a victim of his own faith and the faith of his fathers, which, transplanted in the tropics, in equatorial regions, sapped every vestige of other faiths and developed to the proportions that border on the ugly and grotesque.

For half an hour we were lost in that half-naked yellow mass of human devotion. Nor could we proceed. We were squeezed out of one group into the press of another, for there were in the Island that day about two thousand Javanese. Out of one of the houses the women came and stood near the door hesitating, some of them looking beseechingly with outstretched hands. The King turned in their direction and in a moment he was swallowed up. Now and then his white turban would become visible, as they surged and resurged around it and carried it eventually into the house. We stood watching and waiting. The King was again visible. He stood at the door and clapped for one of the servants, who came cringing and trembling ; and, with tilted head and folded arms, he received a good rating in Turkish. One of the women had complained of the lack of water.

The Quarantine consists of about ten buildings, mostly one story, each with two doors in the centre facing each other. You enter into a vestibule on either side of which is a concrete floor about a foot high. There the pilgrims, after they had passed through the fumigation room, spread their mats and rugs and bedding, and pile their luggage as a partition between each other. In a sense, the place reminded me of our Ellis Island. But here are no iron bars, no dark rooms, no stuffy sleeping quarters, no smelling berths, no heart-eating suspense, and no danger of deportation.

The utter lack of furniture made these buildings look so clean, so airy, so hygienic. The only complaint seemed to be about water. Had they had any previous knowledge of Jeddah, however, their present thirst would be more supportable. They would accept it, one said, as a test of faith—the only one remaining, and lasting only three days. Those who have contagious diseases are removed from the steamer direct to another island not far from Abu Sa'd, with a hospital in it, and beds in the hospital, and doctors and nurses in charge; and they have a little to do in the pilgrim season, in spite of Kamaran at one end of the Red Sea and Tor at the other.

Only a few, however, escape with their contagion to Jeddah; but most of them carry among their baggage a pack of precious merchandise. Oriental treasures—pearls and jades and precious stones, and silks and cashmeres and rugs—the rarest sometimes and the oldest, are brought to the Hijaz by the pilgrims. They pawn them or sell them when their money gives out. Or they carry them as presents to the Grand Sherif or to those in the Holy City who are entrusted with the keys and the favours of the Kaaba. But eventually they find their way to the merchants of Jeddah, who are careful not to expose or advertise their treasures. Not for them the tawdriness of the bazar; but in their homes they transact business, and only through the courtesy of a native can the stranger find them. It is the East, indeed, reticent and retiring—ever content with what the day will bring.

Even the *motawwifin* (guides) are acquiring again this native quality, thanks to the legislations of the Hijaz Government. For as soon as the pilgrim lands in Jeddah, he receives a circular printed in his own language in which his attention is called to the fixed tariff. Everything, from the *sanbook* in the harbour to the last ceremony of the Hajj in Mecca—board and lodging in the two cities, the trip to Mt. 'Arafat, the Zamzam drink, the guide's fee, even the bakshish is listed. This much and no more must you

pay, O most worthy *hajji*; and please report to the authorities any violation of the Tariff.

The only item he has to bargain for is the transportation to Mecca, because, the circular says, the fee depends upon the availability of camels. But I do not think the circular is exact; for I suspect that the camel market cannot be controlled, and the cameleer remains a mercenary and unrepentant one.

To the *motawwifin* also, in spite of the tariff, all pilgrims are not the same. There is, to be sure, a scale of desirability and favour, at the top of which stands the Javanese and at the bottom the blacks of Takrur. The reason is obvious. The *motawwif* or his agent has a tourist rather than a pilgrim in a Muslem of Java; but in a Takruri black there is nothing to attract a servant of the Kaaba. He is as hard as a stone; a hard working man, rather, who works his way across, coming from Port Sudan empty-handed, carrying and fetching in Jeddah, and after a few months, with his well-earned piasters in his bosom-pocket, he walks to the Holy City, where he loafs and invites his soul. Between the two extremes there are different shades of liberality, of sanity, and of sordidness. The Indian pilgrim reads well the tariff and keeps it in his pocket; the Egyptian reads it once and forgets it; the Syrian glances over it and tears it up. He knows better. He is, of all pilgrims, the most impervious to bunco. He is the 'wise' one. The Egyptian is perhaps as wise; but he is not so close-fisted as the *hajji* from Syria.

To the Sherif 'Aun, however, they were all pilgrims; and to his nephew King Husein 'they are all our children, O dear one, and they all deserve our care and attention. . . . The Quarantine is good, is it not so? And can we not fumigate as well as the English? And can we not mitigate, by the grace of Allah, the evil effects of this new creature they call the microbe?'

We were in the launch on our way back to the city, and His Majesty was in a talking mood. 'When I was in

Stamboul, O dear one, I was asked by the Padishah and his Grand Vizier if it were not possible, in order to combat the cholera, to build for the pilgrims houses outside of Mecca. What do they know about the pilgrims, they who live thousands of miles away from the Holy Places? And what do they know about the cholera and its cause? Ibn 'ul-Athir in his History says that from Iraq alone in the pilgrim-season came eighty thousand camels—I say, eighty thousand camels; and often two and sometimes three pilgrims ride in a litter. But Ibn 'ul-Athir mentions not the cholera. Not one case among a hundred thousand pilgrims that came across the desert. It is not so with those who come by sea. For among two or three thousand who make a sea voyage of twenty or thirty days, disease is certain to break out, either in the boat, or in Jeddah, or in Mecca itself. This, O my dear, is one of the facts.

'And there are others which our friends in Stamboul and even in Europe do not know. When the cholera breaks out in Mecca it confines itself to the pilgrims. The natives do not catch the disease. They are fortified—I say, fortified. Allah in his wisdom, through the climate of Al-Hijaz, prepares them for a state of resistance and maintains them in it. Otherwise, who would serve the pilgrims? Even in At-Taief the microbe of the cholera does not prosper outside of its own environment. Six thousand cholera-infected pilgrims were once sent to At-Taief, and not a single case among the inhabitants—I say, not a single case. What is the conclusion, O dear one? The microbe is brought from the East, across the ocean, into our land, and does not take to our people. Allah, praised be he, is all-knowing. And thinkest thou that houses outside the city will keep away the microbe? There is another vital point, O perfect one. The pilgrims come from afar to pass the pilgrimage days in the Great Mosque and in the Holy Places—inside of Mecca—I say, inside of Mecca, and not outside. What do they know of the

pilgrims, they who live thousands of miles away from the Holy Places?'

His Majesty smiled and held up his two hands, the palms toward his breast, in a gesture of finality. After which, reverting to the Quarantine, he asked me again if I did not think it was a perfect institution. The International Medical Commission, which was inspecting quarantines that year, had arrived in Egypt, and I suggested to His Majesty that they be invited to see Abu Sa'd, thinking that he might be thus made to realise a few of its deficiencies. But he took my suggestion at its face value, and ordered his Foreign Secretary to cable to the Hashemite Agent in Cairo about the matter. 'Let the esteemed Commission come and inspect our Quarantine and the means of purification and health at Abu Sa'd.'

Of all such means, I think King Husein only believed in the sun and the air. 'Consider, O thou brilliant one, the cupidity of people. They charge the pilgrim for fumigattion at Tor, and they charge him for fumigation at Kamaran; and they want furthermore to have a hand in Abu-Sa'd and thus exercise full authority over the pilgrims, our children and our brothers. But this shall never be—it is impossible—I say, impossible.

One of the clauses of the Anglo-Arab Treaty to which I shall yet refer, and which King Husein refused to sign in the winter of 1921, was that Great Britain shall have the right to appoint English doctors for the Quarantine of Abu-Sa'd. Not the trifle of an income for a few of their doctors was the clause meant to insure, it was suspected, but the establishment rather of British authority over the Hajj. The suspicion may not be justified. But it should be noted that the modern British method of interfering in the affairs of Arabia and establishing or maintaining an influence in the country, includes an interest shown in public health and is sometimes confined to it.

It should also be stated that the Quarantine at Abu-Sa'd is a superfluity, considering the one at Tor in the

north end, and the other at Kamaran in the south end, of the Red Sea. Had King Husein ordered it closed, therefore, he would have closed with it that imaginary door to health through which Great Briatin is supposed to be seeking to establish her influence in the Hijaz. He might have even reformed Abu-Sa'd or abolished it by applying to it his famous method, which I have mentioned, and of which I give another example.

There was in Mecca an ancient royal band with a cobweb of traditions upon it. Which band played before the royal Palace three times a day, and three times a day drove His Majesty to infidelity. But traditions have to be respected, nevertheless, and doctored in a gentle manner. Now, one of the traditions concerning this band was that its members shall serve for life ; and when one of them died the King appointed another to take his place. But King Husein, the wise and patient reformer, seldom failed in his method of shuffling off a mortal coil. Five years ago a drummer died, and there was no appointment. A year later one of the buglers gave up the ghost, and His Majesty said : 'What harm if it be a bugle less ?' Soon after the tambourine was orphaned, and the royal pleasure was great. Thuswise, by the help of Allah and Izrail [1] he hoped to get rid of the whole band.

Let the reformers come to Mecca and learn. But they may not, like myself, get any farther than Hadda in their schooling ; and I doubt if they will get a better reward for their pain. His Majesty, after staying two weeks in Jeddah for the sake of 'the perfect guest,' went back to Mecca on important business, leaving me with the Poet-Minister and the Poet-Soldier (I discovered one night that my fellow-countryman and friend, Captain Yanni, had also a liaison with the Muse). Nevertheless, I was in the suds. Even the chanting of Sheikh Fouad had lost its magic.

'Perish our vain desires ! the tempest dark
Heeds not the wishes of the driven bark.'

[1] 'Izrāīl, the Angel of Death.

Indeed, O my Sheikh, indeed. I could have welcomed he Mecca band in those dreary days, My thoughts even lwelled upon the drearier tradition which kept me out of the Holy City ; and I sat down, yielding to the mood, ind wrote to my royal friend the following lines :

MY LORD KING HUSEIN, ALLAH UPHOLD HIM :

There is a heart in my heart, and thou art today its Kaaba ; and there is an eye in my soul, and thou art to-day its only horizon. If a religious tradition prevents me from following thee to the Holy City, it cannot prevent my heart and my soul. But I am human, O thou of Majesty ; and the body would fain follow the heart. . . . Canst thou not make it possible ? Wouldst thou thus abandon a loving guest, who feels, in thine absence, like a weaned infant in a desert of separation ? Shall not the desert blossom and the silvery waters therein stream again by a single word—the word, Come—which My Lord canst utter ? It is the fond hope, the dream, which is still cherished by

Your Majesty's Devoted and Grateful Friend.

Two days after, I received a reply signed by His Majesty at the top, and couched in a phraseology which is even more savoury than my own. Here in proof is the translation :

MY DEAR ESTEEMED ONE :

Salaam and profound respect. Thy note was received with the fingers of love and longing ; and great as my joy was in perusing its precious words, even greater was my shame in having left thee in Jeddah. The sincere one, thine ever, hath done himself the wrong of depriving himself of the pleasure and the benefit of the virtues of thy liberal mind. And howsoever important the necessity of this deprivation be deemed, it is, alas, but an argument against me. Albeit, there be in thine excellencies and the discernment thereof what renders all explanation superfluous. Nothing in sooth will lighten the affliction which I impose upon myself so much as my belief that the causes and reasons (for such action) are among the things which thy virtues deem worthy of consideration. Allah protect thee, O dear one, and favor me with the opportunity to compensate for what hath passed.

Neither in Arabia's golden meadows of prose, nor in her hanging gardens of poesy find I words more mellow and flattering. His Majesty returned to Jeddah a week later, and in his *majlis*, of a certainty, were compensation enow.

CHAPTER IX

THE OLD AND THE NEW

INCONSISTENCIES may meet in every man ; and for every Arab of note to-day there are two Kaabas, the Kaaba of religion and the Kaaba of the world. He may turn his face towards the East once or five times, between sunrise and sunset ; but for the rest of the day he turns towards the West, towards Europe. O thou my Kaaba when I dress, and when I eat, and when I ride in the automobile. But the new Kaaba is hedged about with complications and expenditures, which cannot be conquered without the help of either international treaties and financial loans, or scientific expeditions and economic concessions. King Husein tried both, and was still wavering when I saw him between a foreign treaty and a national concession.

He sent to Syria for specialists, mining and agricultural, chemical and medical—the alchemists of modern science —who would discover and dig up for him the wealth of Al-Hijaz ; and they were all Arab Muslems who could go anywhere, in the sacred precincts and beyond, without let or hindrance. For a whole year they roamed and nosed about ; smelling oil here ; seeing gold there ; giving to certain hills and spots such names as copper, mica, iron ; and asserting that there is even a diamond mine in the vicinity of Mecca. But there was not in all Arabia a national syndicate to exploit this hidden wealth and save His Majesty from the fangs of foreign corporations.

Soon, however, a syndicate, headed by a Syrian Muslem, was formed for the special benefit of King Husein and Al-

Hijaz. Its resources, financial and technical, were adequate; its conditions for exploitation were incredibly liberal; and its Muslem sentiment, which washed its motives of every tinge of selfishness, was unquestioned. It would give the Government of the Hijaz 40% of its net profits and an option of purchasing 25% of the shares of the Companies formed. It also offered to build for the Government two railroad lines, one from Jeddah to Mecca, another from Yambo' to Al-'Ala, free of charge, as the pious friends of the Syndicate put it. What the Syndicate proposed was to build the lines, turn them over with all their equipments to the Hijaz Government, for its exclusive use, and collect the bill afterwards by instalments paid out of the 40% profit. If there were no profits, more would be the gain to the Hijaz Government, who would have gotten two railroads free of charge.

But King Husein was still dreaming his pan-Arab dream, which necessitated a treaty with Great Britain, whose conditions, to be favourable to His Majesty, depended upon his granting the concession to an English company closely connected, it was said, with the Colonial Office. So, the offer of the pious Muslem Syndicate was rejected, and the Anglo-Arab treaty in the end met with a like fate. What was left to the Hijaz, therefore, of the fruits of the Scientific Expedition were the Military College and the Agricultural School of Mecca. The two do not hang together in a modern scheme of progress; but the Agricultural School is of no use in a country that has no agriculture.

As for the Military College, its success depended upon the Bedu, who are the born enemies of order and discipline. They know how to carry a rifle, putting it always to its right use, and that is sufficient. If you would teach them anything else and subject them to a rule, you have to pay them instead of charging a fee. King Husein paid something at the start; for he would replace, at any cost, the regular army of Al-Hijaz which was wiped out in the

winter of 1919 by the Ikhwan, the Wahhabys of Najd, in the battle of Tarabah.

In order to maintain the Military College, therefore, and re-establish a regular army, which was to redeem the pride and glory of Al-Hijaz, King Husein came down with a heavy hand upon the merchants of his Kingdom. How else could he arm the Bedu and teach them to step in line? The merchants paid and groaned at first in the bazar; but His Majesty would make them pay double for groaning. Willy nilly, they paid and did their groaning afterwards at home. Some of them, however, who had no homes, were offered the hospitality of the jail. Or they were asked to Mecca, which is much worse. For there, King Husein had a dungeon, many feet underground, which was as prominent in the history of Al-Hijaz under his reign as was the Bosphorus in the days of Abd'ul-Hamid. He was terrible in his anger; and when any one by royal order was sent to Mecca, there was nothing left for him but the dungeon and the mercy of Allah. Guilty or innocent, they wrote their wills before leaving their homes, they who were ordered to Mecca.

A British squadron anchored one day in the waters of Jeddah and was the topic of conversation. 'But the Hashemite squadron,' said one of the citizens, who was deemed a wit by some, a fool by others, 'the Hashemite squadron is greater. Otherwise, the battleships of the English would not have come to make salaam.' A few days later he was ordered to Mecca; and when he arrived at the Holy City, he was taken directly to the dungeon, where he remained four months without a hearing, and without knowing what was his offence. He was then brought before His Majesty the Great Emancipator, who pinched his ear and gave him a lecture to help him in the future to better speech when the Hashemite Government and its Navy are mentioned.

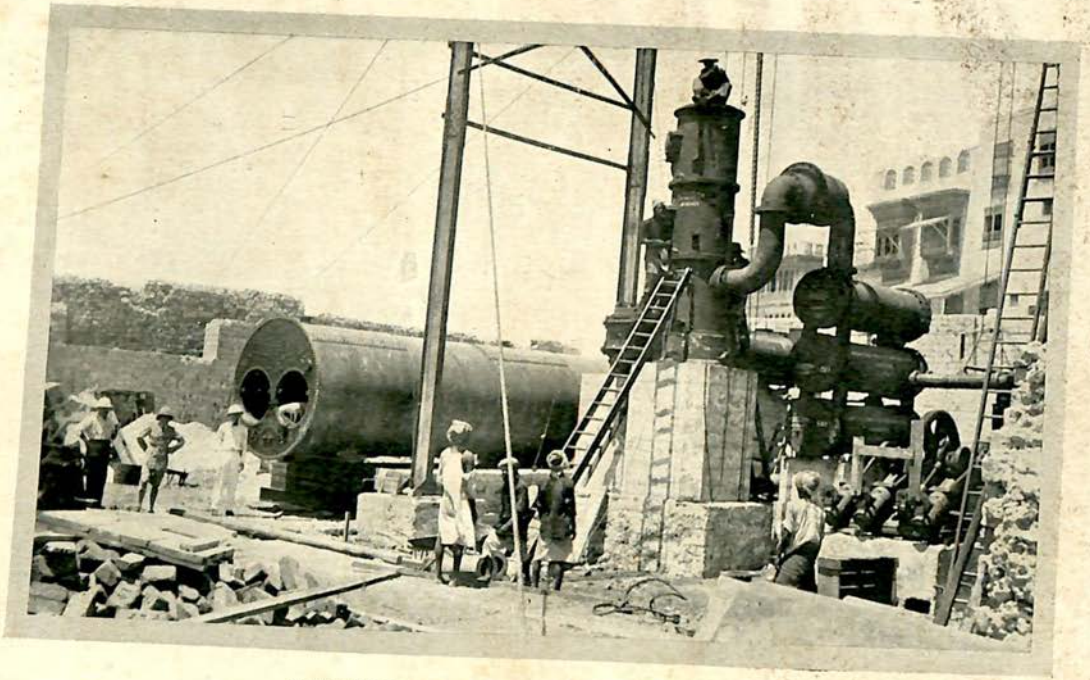
I spoke with one of the distinguished citizens of Jeddah about a bright boy he had, and asked him to send him, not

to Europe, but to Egypt or to Syria for an education. Reply: That is my wish, but *Saiyedna* will not permit. There are others too in Jeddah who would educate their children outside of the Hijaz, in Syria or in Egypt—but *Saiyedna* (our Lord) will not permit.

I have already dwelt upon King Husein's profound respect for tradition. Even more profound is his respect for the Koranic law. Everything that is contrary to it in word or deed, in the life of a Muslem; and everything that has aught in it with a tendency to give the Muslem a freedom, which might take him out of the law and the tradition; yea, everything with a germ of knowledge in it, which might develop, even after two or three generations, into a grub of infidelity, these are evils which the wise legislator and the just ruler, if they be far-sighted, will always combat even before they come to light.

Above all things King Husein desired eternal happiness for the Muslem people—the happiness which Allah describes and to which the Prophet points in the Holy Book—the happiness that does not depend upon music or dancing or wine or riches, nor upon education in foreign schools. If, however, he tolerated certain things, which do this 'eternal happiness' no ill, as aeroplanes and armoured cars, to use against the *Ikhwan*, or a condenser to use against the malaria of Al-Hijaz, he could not tolerate at all such things of knowledge as would confuse the mind and corrupt the heart. He could not tolerate anything that has the tendency of drawing the Arabs, even though a span, from the straight path of their religion, which is their most precious treasure in this world and the next.

His Majesty often said to me that the only education the Arabs need is that which suits their life and the nature of their land, 'and enables them, within the bounds of religion—I say, within the bounds of religion—to enjoy its perfections.' There are two public schools in Jeddah, where about two hundred boys find these 'perfections' in the three R's, a little geography and history, and a pro-



SETTING UP A NEW CONDENSER AT JEDDAH.

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fusion of the Koran. At both of these schools, which I visited, speeches were made by the 'stars' of the class welcoming the guest, their 'brother Arab' who has come from afar to help 'our rising Mother' to achieve the perfections (the King's phraseology was the style in those days); and one of the boys, a fiery little spirit, after the usual praise overture, impressed upon me, in eloquent words and gestures, the need of my doing so 'without fear or compromise.' But there was an undue amount of the alcohol of politics, for a boy of his age, in the sherbet of his praise. He informed me that the Hijaz is indebted to His Hashemite Majesty the Great Emancipator and to his valiant sons for the freedom and independence it has regained. 'But we want to see this freedom and this independence spread all over the Arab Peninsula.' And then, in the bold and fearless manner of his race, after asking me point-blank if I did not think so, he proceeded to answer his own question. 'You would not have come from far-away America, the mother of freedom, to Al-Hijaz, the first-born of Arab-freedom, if you did not think so.'

From the school we went to a more modern and more specialized public institution, the T. and T. (Telegraph and Telephone) Office, which is one of the modern Departments of the Hijaz Government. It is called the Department of Communication, and the Chief has time to receive visitors and do the customary honours. Coffee and tea and soda water were served in succession, other guests coming in at that particular moment to share in the bounty of the Government, while the Chief was dilating on the easy tenor of his Department's way. The operators are all Arabs, who use the Arab system; and their business is simple, for they send every message by cable across to Port Sudan—the only cable connecting the Peninsula on the West side with the outside world.

Next to the Chief's private office is the *Markaz*, or Central, the only place of its kind in the world, I think,

which is not hallowed by the presence of the hallo-girl, nor her 'allo' sister. The operators are gentlemen in long skirts, who hide the receiver under silk *sumadahs* crowned with silk *ighals*, and add a line to their fine figures with a red or a green sash wound jauntily around the waist.

Markaz! Central! and the affable young gentleman is ever ready with *marhaba* (welcome). The perpetual smile is there too—in his voice. I said, 'ever ready' in haste; for he is at times, especially in the afternoon, caught napping. His switch board has twenty-five wires distributed to the Government Departments and a long-distance to Mecca and At-Taief. *Markaz*!—Mecca—His Majesty. And you hang up the receiver. In half a minute, a minute at the most, your telephone rings and *Markaz* calls you respectfully by your name. How did he know? He knows the voice of every one of his customers. *Marhaba*, His Majesty will speak with you—or His Eminence the Supreme Judge—or any one you desire in the Government outside the Kaaba. There, the telephone wires, unlike the wires of the electric, are not permitted.

On our way back from the T. and T. Office, as we were walking up the main street, I was attracted to a little square balustered platform, jutting between the baker's shop and the grocer's, on which sat or rather knelt two men opposite each other. One of them had a roll of bills in his hand; and before him on the carpet were little stacks of silver of small denomination, while in a movable case with shelves and pigeon-holes were stacks of dollars of various kinds—Egyptian, Turkish, American, etc. One of the men was counting his bills, the other was counting his beads.

It was about noon when we passed, and I witnessed what was more extraordinary than the open-air bank or the kneeling bankers. The Mosque was across the way, and the *muazzen* was in the minaret calling the Faithful to the noon devotion. So, when the man finished counting his bills, he and his partner got up, stepped down from the platform, covered it with a straw mat, and, leaving their

bank thus behind them, went to say their mid-day prayer. O Memory, be not unkind. Efface the vision of the city bandits of the West who walk into a bank at high noon, and, under the muzzle of a gun, make away with what they find before them. Or shall I ever forget the straw mat guarding the Bank of Jeddah, while its President and its Cashier were making their genuflections in the Mosque to Allah and the Prophet?

But the Justice of the Peace, whom I met the following day at a dinner, was not surprised at all when I was relating enthusiastically about the matter. 'There are no robberies in the city,' he said, 'because we apply the *shar'* (the Koranic Law); and there are but few people in the jail. The political offenders are sent to Mecca; the robber, after his hand is cut off, is set free to be an example and a warning; and only those who are guilty of petty offences do we imprison. . . . The Arabs quarrel very much, with reason or without reason—they fight for nothing—a word said in anger, even a word which one fails to say sometimes, causes a fight. In sooth, such a case once came before me. A beduin quarrelled with another and struck him because he did not reply to his greeting. But the poor fellow, who failed to salaam, was deaf. The Arab is often foolish in his pride, and his temper is like fire.'

His Honour, a burly but unconcentrated figure of a gentleman in stockingless feet and a heavy turban, was neither an Arab nor a Sudanese, but a third or fourth generation, one would say, of both. For he was of a colour hard to define: burned ivory under a wash coating comes nearest to it. Nevertheless, he had the manners of a Sherif brought up in Stamboul. I asked my host afterwards if His Honour was a good judge. 'He fills the diwan,' was the reply. He sprawled, to be sure, upon the diwan, but he had the politeness to conceal his feet. Nor would he have spoken of the law and the jail, had I not opened the subject. It is one of the fine traits of the Arabs that they do not talk shop.

But Captain Yanni, whose official title is Assistant Director of the Aviation Department, is neither Arab nor Muslem, and is therefore forgiven for airing his views ever and always on the Air Force of King Husein. He had moreover a shop of ideas which he would never close for the sake of Arabia. Captain Yanni would have been a centre of trouble, of change, of activity, of infidelity, of progress in Hijaz the Holy, if Hijaz the Holy were not a wilderness. He was the one man in Jeddah who did not hold his head down in the presence of the King. And he drank, and he smoked, and he once had a Muhammadan mistress. Captain Yanni is a bandit of the spirit : he has in him the blood of his own bandit-ancestors, the modern Greeks, as well as that of a saintly Syrian family. His maternal uncle was a bishop ; his father was a publisher, and he was in the Hijaz the necessary evil of King Husein.

The necessary good, if the Old Man knew well his business. Yanni would supply the Hijaz Government with all the instruments of modern warfare—the surplus or the second-hand stock of one of the Allied Powers—in perfect condition, at one-tenth of the cost price ! Tanks at £250 each to mow down the Wahhabys ; aeroplanes at £125 a piece to scatter the Idrisi forces to the wind and banish the Idrisi House clean out of Arabia ; autobuses at the price of a second-hand Ford for the comfort and delectation of the pilgrims ; and, ye Gods of the Acropolis ! this infernal Roumi, this Greco-Syrian revolutionary, would open a café and a cinema in the very heart of Jeddah. A performer of miracles, if the Old Man would only nod.

What he did once, for my benefit, was equal to a miracle. The Condenser was out of order for a few days, and there was no water in Jeddah but that of the wells, which was brackish and lukewarm and scarce and dirty. Even the water that oozed out of the earthen jar and gathered in a bowl that held it was of the colour of whey. I took it with lemon juice, in addition to the quinine, to ward off the

malaria. The Condenser water was clean but not always perfectly desalted. Besides, it was always as lukewarm as the water from the wells. This was the calamity that lasted twenty days. Never in my life did I have a greater desire, a more oppressing desire, for a glass of ice water.

One day I heard a noise in the kitchen that resembled the tinkle of ice in a pitcher of water in the hand of a negro boy at the door! and I was transported to New York, elated for a trice, and tormented for a long time after with the disillusion. I poetized before my friend about ice water, even about spring water, even about the water of Ashokan in distant Manhattan. And what happened? The following day at luncheon a glass of ice water was placed before me. I could not believe my eyes. I could not believe my hand. But the glass was ice cold and the vapour was on my fingers. Praised be the Most High! No glass I have ever raised to my lips gave me a more intoxicating delight.

Now, where in Jeddah did the ice water come from? Yanni is not a magician—I say—in the manner of His Majesty—he is not a magician. But I will discover to you the trick and leave you to judge of his ingenious and enterprising mind. A steamer had anchored in the harbour, and Yanni had seen the two thermos bottles I had in my bag. A moment later one of his Takrur-myrmidons, with a note and the said two bottles in his hand, was seen hiring a *sanbook* at the port.

The King was still in Mecca that day. So in the evening, our friends who came to dinner, took their Scotch with water instead of soda—ice water, thanks to Yanni—and took it in the drawing room! But when His Majesty was in Jeddah, we had to go into a closet, and in the light of a candle do the bloody deed. He had us all cowed, the Old Hashemite. For in his days Jeddah was supposed to be dry, and the smuggling of liquor was inevitable. Much of it was even smuggled into Mecca. One of the King's Secretaries once lost his job, because, while packing to

return to the Holy City, a bottle dropped out of the bag in the presence of the King. But as soon as His Majesty was out of the city gate, Jeddah began its celebrations. The bottles came out of the chests, the lute and the tambourine were uncovered, and he who had a voice gave it the freedom of the night. The King is gone to Mecca, Allah be praised !

But when he came back to town, the Jeddites put on sackcloth and ashes, and their city became a sanctuary submerged in tea and soda-water and milk. The drinking in the closets by the light of the candle, nevertheless, continued, and Pericles of the cork helmet and the latest brand from Athens or London, came withal to the King's *majlis*, and kowtowed and fawned and kissed Majesty's hand. The bootlegging Greek ! if the son of the Prophet but knew. In Jeddah once I met an accursed Roumi, who was what the Americans call a bootlegger, and I took him by the throat and smote him thus.

Old Pericles, feeling a distant kinship to Yanni, often came in the evening bringing a bottle with him ; otherwise, the Army officers would not let him join in a game of poker. A few came to the Guest House for fellowship—and a drink—only ; and one of these had a few ideas as wild as Yanni's. He was the most liberal turban in Jeddah, and he would always drink till his liberalism began to reel. Sheikh Qasem, who speaks English as well as Turkish and Arabic, was sent to Constantinople in the days of the Young Turks to represent the Hijaz in Parliament. There he met and befriended the translator of Homer into Arabic, the Christian philosopher and poet Sulaiman Bustany ; and every time they had a discussion, Qasem would say to Sulaiman : ' The only way to reform the world is to make you Sheikh 'ul-Islam and be myself the Pope of Rome.' He would then quote, being an orthodox boozer, from the English translation of Omar Khayyam :

> ' Would we not shatter it to bits and then
> Remould it nearer to the heart's desire ? '

When Sheikh Qasem first told us the story, one of the Army officers exclaimed : ' Nothing can reform it but the sword.'

The Poet demurred : ' You had the sword and you reformed nothing.'

The merchant interposed : ' Our curse is the Bedu—the Bedu are a problem which only Allah can solve.'

' Whereupon Captain Yanni, leaving the poker table and coming to the centre of the room : ' Armed ignorance can only be overcome by armed education.'

' Excellent ! ' exclaimed the Army officer. ' The Hashemite Military College was established for that purpose.'

' Hashemisms can reform nothing.' The voice was that of Sheikh Qasem, who calmly laid down his glass and calmly continued, ' Zu Hasan [1] will remain robbers and cut-throats till the end of time ; the Bedu of Ruwais [2] can never be educated or reformed ; and the Buqoum [3] will lie and cheat and betray till Allah wipe out the last of their seed. Pray upon the Prophet !—And thou, O Roumi, fill the glass.'

[1] Zu Hasan are Sherifs who live between Lith and Jeddah along the coast and are pirates and highway robbers.

[2] The Bedu of Ruwais, who are like Zu Hasan beyond Government control, operate in the north between Jeddah and Yambo'.

[3] The Buqoum is a tribe that lives in Tarabah and Khurmah on the borderline between Najd and the Hijaz ; and among them are Sherifs who have become Wahhabys. The King claimed them because they are of Benu Luaiy, the Sherifs of the Hijaz, and the Sultan of Najd claimed them because they had become Wahhabys. But the question was settled at the Battle of Tarabah (1919), in which the Army of the Hijaz, 12,000, led by the Ameer Abdullah, was wiped out completely by 6,000 of the forces of Ibn Sa'oud.

CHAPTER X

THE HORNS OF DIPLOMACY

THAT there is more than one cause, beside the roseate promises of the Allies, for the break between England and the Hijaz and the subsequent downfall of King Husein, is vaguely supposed ; that there are individuals, with an axe to grind and without, official and officious individuals who are also responsible for the rupture, is a matter of common knowledge in diplomatic circles : but that some of these individuals are closely related to King Husein is only known by a few in and outside of Arabia. I propose in this chapter to throw some light upon the latter phase of the subject, leaving the War-promises and the understanding based upon them for a succeeding discussion.

When I first visited Jeddah in the winter of 1922 the relations between Great Britain and King Husein were strained, because of the failure in negotiating the Treaty I have previously mentioned. But what was the cause of the failure ? There are two stages to that Treaty, the first ending in the winter of 1921-22, the second ending in the autumn of 1924. I refer to the failure in the first stage because the second failure, maugre the aftermath of Let-us-be-friends, was subsequently inevitable. But few perhaps outside of Mecca inner circles know that England failed to get King Husein's signature, not through the diplomats that drafted the Treaty, although they might have made it more elastic, considering that they were dealing with an Oriental, but chiefly through her emissaries. Of these was the famous Col. Lawrence, who, with

a noted Syrian Pan-Arabist came to Jeddah a few months before I had arrived, and was dead sure of success. Did he not know the Arabs? Had he not to his credit the greatest achievement in the Anglo-Arab annals of the century? The Foreign Office, therefore, entrusted him with the Treaty and sent with him as aid in council the Syrian Pan-Arabist, who was then the Agent of the Ameer Faisal in London.

But these gentlemen, both capable in their own respective spheres, had to deal with a veteran of the Yieldiz diplomacy, who is also a wilful and obstinate Arab. The Descendant of the Prophet would not be forced; and Col. Lawrence, all his triumphs in Arabia to the contrary notwithstanding, spent a whole month in Jeddah to no purpose. He had lost apparently his cunning. Alas! he also once lost his temper, which is very rare in a British diplomatic agent.

There ended the negotiations; for the King thenceforth would have no direct word with His Britannic Majesty's Delegation. They packed their grips, therefore, the Syrian and the archaeologist, and returned home.

In justice to Col. Lawrence, however, I must say that the Syrian's dictatorial manner was, to say the least, unwarranted; and it mattered not what his preference was, whether his sentiment was pro-British or pro-Arab. He had already failed, though serving King Faisal faithfully in the past, to uphold the Cause; he could not save King Faisal in the Syrian *débâcle*; and he had come to advise the father of Faisal to sign a Treaty in which the ceding of Syria to the French is practically guaranteed. Moreover, King Husein disliked and distrusted anyone who had anything to do, directly or indirectly, with Faisal and his failures. Had Col. Lawrence, therefore, been the best of diplomats, his associate would still have been a drawback in the negotiations.

The crux of the matter was the clause regarding the status of Syria and Palestine; everything else might have

been arranged to the satisfaction of both parties, King Husein even consenting to a British doctor at the Hijaz Quarantine of Abu-Sa'd. But why insist upon a clause regarding a country whose status had already been defined by the League of Nations? The heart of the matter was that England, for the sake of her Muslem population, wanted King Husein's goodwill, and King Husein, for the sake of his sovereign State, wanted a loan. As for collateral he would give anything save the right of intervention in any form. English capital for the development of the resources of the country will be welcome; even English specialists might have been employed by the Government. Only let us not mention Syria and Palestine. The accomplished fact there is sufficient for Great Britain's peace of mind; and the failure to mention it in the Treaty would have been a feather to tickle King Husein's pan-Arab dream. Here was Col. Lawrence's opportunity, if he had, as it was claimed, discretionary power; here was the inspiration he has missed.

But the British Government, instead of reconsidering the matter at that time, made it worse. Evil council certainly prevailed when the dominant idea was to bring pressure to bear, by fair means or foul, upon the King. I have already shown how vital to the Hijaz is the pilgrimage. It is an annual world's fair, lasting from four to six months, upon which the trade and the general activity of the country depends. Here is the soft spot, the sore spot, for a diplomacy ill-advised to work upon.

I say ill-advised, and I say it advisedly. The European community in Jeddah, including the Consuls, is very small; but whatever news of Mecca the world gets must necessarily go through a foreign channel—one of the foreigners, of whom is Reuter's correspondent—or be either hearsay or concoction. Neither England nor Italy nor France is to blame: the intrigues at the European capitals often travel to the Consulates even in the distant wilds. When a dispatch is sent out of Jeddah, therefore,

whether by one of the Consuls or by Reuter's correspondent, stating that the Mecca Government is conscripting the pilgrims, the English, guilty or not, will be first suspected.

But, to tell the whole truth, that dispatch was not without foundation. The motive behind it, however, is more insidious than the exaggeration. It is to discourage the Muhammadans, particularly in the East, in India and Java, whose quota of pilgrims is the greatest every year. In other words, the British Government practically said to King Husein : We can ruin this business of the Hijaz, and we will do so, if you cede not to our desire. Thus King Husein was driven to retaliation. It's a miserable business all round ; but the guilt, I must say, was less where the injury was most felt. The Mecca Government was placed in the wrong light, and the whole truth was not published even in King Husein's Weekly, *The Qiblah*. I dwell upon this matter to show how much evil can be done by a newspaper dispatch, especially when it comes from a country that cannot through the same means justify or exonerate itself.

Here then is the whole truth. I have spoken in a former chapter of the Takrur pilgrims, the blacks who come in large numbers from Port Sudan and make their way across to Mecca. But after the supreme realization of a Muslem's dream, they find themsleves high and dry in the Holy City, and work no longer attracts them. Indeed, with the pious consistency of the ' nigger ' who has realized his celestial dream, they refuse thenceforth to work. They become a public charge, and the Government has to interfere. In the instance mentioned it conscripted the idle among them; and a few in Jeddah, preferring to be soliders than hammals, even volunteered. This is the basis of that fatal dispatch.

But when it came back to Mecca, through the Arabic dailies of Cairo, there was a volcano of wrath in the Palace, and evil council, there too, prevailed. They would

retaliate. For only a perfidious England is capable of such falsifications. A few of the Muslems of India—British subjects—were therefore clapped in jail on a charge which otherwise might have been decided out of court.

The British Agent in Jeddah protested, and the dispatch this time was worse than the first. It furnished the newspapers with such sensational headlines as More Pilgrims are Conscripted! A Riot in the Kaaba! Muslem India read it and protested; England heard Muslem India and protested; Mecca heard London and protested. Meanwhile, the poison had done its work and no one was the better for it.

The pilgrim is a source of revenue to the British Government and to British Steamship Companies as well as to the people of the Hijaz. This, from a worldly point of view; while from the higher, the spiritual, which one may dispute but not oppose, the pilgrim deserves the respect of the world. To use him as a pawn in the diplomatic game, whether in London or in Mecca, is, to say the least, a symptom of utter despair. You cannot by irritants and counter-irritants get a treaty signed, much less obtain a loan or establish any commercial relations.

A year later, when the negotiations were resumed, King Husein was more unhappy in his choice of envoy than was Great Britain in hers. A young Muslem dandy, Europeanized from top to toe, who was living in London by his wits, came to Mecca with a scheme to rehabilitate the Pan-Arab Movement through a treaty and a concession; and with the oil of adulation, than which nothing better softened the King, he was able to wind his scheme—in theory—and set it going. His Majesty applauded and moreover rewarded financially the adventurer, who hied him back to London with the same cocksureness that carried Col. Lawrence to Jeddah. But his subsequent failure was more ignominious and more injurious to his royal client.

For as he came and went between Downing Street and

Mecca, he babbled in the Cairo Press, which was hostile in those days to King Husein, thus giving it another weapon against him. And what charges and vituperations! He would sign the treaty, and grant a concession to a British syndicate, and give away Syria and Palestine, if England will support his claim to the Khalifate. (At Amman that year he had been elected Khalif of Al-Islam by the people of Al-Hijaz and some of the Muslems of Palestine and Iraq.) But for the very reason that King Husein had accepted the Khalifate and thus exposed the weak spots in his armour; and for the reason that England had secured a sure footing in Iraq, having succeeded in getting King Faisal and his Government to accept the treaty which they had repeatedly refused; and for the further reason that she had established a line of aerial communication between Cairo and Baghdad, having secured her position in Trans-Jordan also, by means of another docile and self-seeking son of the House of Hashem, the pact with Al-Hijaz lost much of its value, and she was no longer eager for its immediate consummation. Thus, through the sons, the Government of Great Britain achieved what is tantamount to a victory over the father, who long before that had been in the lethal shadow of filial selfishness and disregard.

> 'Filial ingratitude!
> Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
> For lifting food to 't?'

I recall one particular visit of King Husein, when early in the morning the Ameer Zeid himself came to announce His Majesty. We hurried downstairs to receive him, and walked up behind him to the vestibule, where he doffed the galosh he always wears over his shoes and entering into the drawing room, he sat in a chair and drew me gently by the hand to the diwan on his right. His private secretary, who carried a portfolio, sat next to him, and two black slaves stood at attention near the door. Soon the coffee

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was served, His Majesty drinking in his own cup, which was carried by one of the slaves in a velvet case ornamented with pearls.

There was a shadow of melancholy upon his brow and a slight note of pathos in his silken voice, as he spoke that morning of the Pan-Arab Movement, the Conference of Versailles, the English, and his son Faisal.

'Think not that I am complaining, O dear brilliant one. I say we are steadfast in our purpose, unchanging in our service to the nation, no matter how the complications develop and how the difficulties multiply. We only desire the good of Arabia, and the Syrians are of the heart of Arabia. If we rise in the perfections, and keep away from the designs of self-seekers and the intrigues of intriguers—I exclude not the nearest to me—I say, the nearest to me—whether they merely err or betray—the Hijaz will then follow Syria. And I, O worthy one, will follow whomsoever they choose for leadership and service—I say, I will follow whomsoever they choose.'

The private secretary, obeying His Majesty's gesture, opened his portfolio and took out some papers, which he gave me to read.

'I am not complaining, O dear brilliant one. But here are the pledges . . . and the rights of a father. . . . The lowest of the Bedu will not break a pledge. . . . If they had obeyed me, if they had followed my advice, there would have been no vacillation and no compromise at the Conference. They have opened the door of Syria to the French and their political blunders almost killed the Arab Movement.'

I learned afterwards, from a fugitive footnote of His Majesty, that the pronoun in 'they obeyed . . . they followed . . . etc.' reverts to those who represented him at Damascus and at the Conference of Versailles under the leadership of the Ameer Faisal. I learned also that His Majesty King Husein had the desire of coming to Syria himself and of going to Paris to represent the Arabs at the first Peace Conference. There was a rivalry between

father and son. And when the Ameer Faisal returned to Al-Hijaz, after he had been to Europe for the third time, his royal father did not come down as usual from Mecca to meet him in Jeddah. Nor did he send him an automobile. The famous Faisal went to Mecca as the Ameer Faisal of pre-war days, riding like a native Arab.

Here be indeed a sorry situation. For the truth in the matter is neither wholly on this side nor on that: neither father nor son can justly say, I am wholly right. If King Husein had represented the Arabs at the Versailles Conference, there would have been no vacillation, I am certain, and his achievement would have been more solid and more beneficial to the Arabs. But King Husein in Damascus, in Syria, would have lost what he had gained at Versailles, because the people of Syria preferred the modern-minded and facile Faisal to his old-fashioned and stubborn father. The uncompromising attitude, therefore, which would have served its purpose in Paris, would have been disastrous in Damascus; for a king or a leader, with a religious bee in his bonnet, cannot rule a country so divided by religions and sects as Syria.

But looking at the matter from the viewpoint of a father, and considering those rights, which neither circumstance nor diplomacy respected, we find ourselves face to face with a human tragedy, whose very heart is a sturdy and grim Sheikh, a noble and venerable Arab; and he remained till the last unchangeable in his purpose, in his Government, and in his Weekly. If his sword was broken, his pen was not; and with it he slashed right and left. Nor would he accept anything less than KING OF ALL THE ARABS as title, with or without the assent of the other kings of Arabia, even though his authority did not extend southward farther than Kunfudha and eastward farther than Al-Taief.

A deceived king and a grieved father! A man 'more sinned against than sinning.' He complained not of Fate, although in his heart was the very heel of Fate; he com-

plained not of the Bedu, although his breast was ulcerous with the treacheries of the Bedu; he regretted not the blunders and the basenesses that preceded the Movement, for he considered himself *the* Movement first and last; and maugre the behaviour of 'our Faisal' and 'our Zeid' and 'our dear one' in Trans-Jordan, he was still sturdy and steadfast and staunch. 'Our children are our enemies.' How true, especially in the ruling families, is the saying of Balzac.

CHAPTER XI

BETWEEN CONSTANTINOPLE AND MECCA

KING HUSEIN was the most imposing personality among the Arab kings of his time as well as the oldest of them in age and the highest in religious rank. He was also the most devious in his political methods, the weakest in real authority, and the greatest in cares and sorrows. In official documents he was called King of Al-Hijaz, in the Mecca Weekly, King of all the Arabs, while in the eyes of those who knew but little of Arabia outside of the Hijaz, he was the Great Emancipator. There is no doubt that for a brief period of time, whose events will not, I think, recur, and whose opportunities will not be vouchsafed again, he was an emancipator in the sense that he sought, and was partly successful in, the realization of a national hope and a Hashemite dream.

His principal merits were in the uprising against the Turks, although the principles of the revolution were subservient to self-interest and compromise; in making the Arab cause known to Europe, although at bottom it was the cause of the Sherifian House; and in the tenacity and passion with which he upheld the rights of the Arabs, even though those rights were often too vague and variable. But in the Arab Movement, indeed, was his glory and the glory of his brave sons who took an active part in the war of emancipation, while in the Pan-Arab dream is the desert waste in which all their hopes were subsequently lost. Who is to blame? A brief account of the life of King Husein will help us to answer this question.

Husein Ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd ul Mu'ih ibn 'Aun [1] was born in Constantinople in 1855 and brought to Mecca, a child of two, by his father, who later returned to the Ottoman capital and was appointed by the Sultan a member of the Supreme Council of the Empire. His son Husein, in his early boyhood, rejoined him there and was brought up in an environment which was both Turkish and Arabic in its influences. But after the death of his father, Husein returned to the Hijaz, where he lived with his uncle Abdullah, who was then Grand Sherif of Mecca, and afterwards married his daughter 'Abdiyah Hanem.[2] The Sherif Abdullah, who, like his brother Ali, spent most of his life in Stamboul, had imbibed its political spirit and assimilated its social manners, so that the moulding influences upon young Husein had not much changed.

But the Sherif Abdullah was succeeded by his brother the Sherif Hasan, a man of unspotted character, who was assassinated in Jeddah; and he was succeeded by the third brother, the famous Sherif 'Aun the reformer, of whom I have spoken in a former chapter. They all took a deep interest in their nephew the young Sherif Husein and tried to bring him up, each in his manner, in what they considered the right path. But he eventually went his own way, which was somewhat turbulent, and developed, in the days of the Sherif 'Aun, into a leader of

[1] In what is called the Fourth Dynasty of the Stewardship of the Kaaba, which begins in 1201 A.D. and continues to the present time, there are branches of the House of Hashem which have been established and upreared each by a leader of genius. The present ruling branch, which was established in the first quarter of the last century by Muhammad ibn 'Abd ul-Mu'in ibn 'Aun, was supported by Ibrahim Pasha, son of Muhammad Ali of Egypt, when he occupied parts of Arabia, as against the branch of Zu Zeid. Both these branches, the Zu Zeid and the Zu 'Aun, who are rivals for the stewardship of the Kaaba and consequent power in the Hijaz, are descendants of Benu Hasan, whose leader Muhammad ibn Abu Numaiy was the great ancestor of the present sherifs. And Ibn Abu Numaiy is descendant from another Hashemite leader Qotadah ibn Idris, who in turn is descendant of Musa'l-Joun, who is the great-grandson of Al-Hasan, son of Ali ibn Abi Taleb and his wife Fatemah, daughter of the Prophet.

[2] She is the mother of Ali, Abdullah and Faisal. After her death he married a Turkish lady who is the mother of Zeid.

questionable motives and purposes—questionable in the eyes of both the Sherif and the Dowlah. So, when he was about thirty-eight years of age (1892), he was sent to Constantinople, where, like all the sherifs that preceded him, he became the captive-guest of the Padishah. There at the fountain-head he imbibed more of that spirit, which qualified him for a career similar to that of his father.

The Sherif Husein was raised to the rank of Vizier and then appointed a member in the Supreme Council of the Empire, which office he held till 1908, the year of the first Turkish Revolution, thus remaining sixteen years in Constantinople the second time he was sent there. But he was not, in spite of his conservative heritage and upbringing, inimical at first to the Young Turks, who made him Grand Sherif and sent him back to Mecca. Indeed, he continued to be loyal to them, or at least to show loyalty, till the second year of the world-war, when he declared the revolution and took up arms against them.

There is something particularly strange and inexplicable in the events of those days, when he was Grand Sherif of Mecca and Rateb Pasha was the Vali of Al-Hijaz. They were black and turbulent days ; oppressions in a reign of chaos were multiplied, and order and justice had given place to banditry and crime. The pilgrims and the *motawwifin* themselves were attacked and robbed in broad daylight in the very shadow of the Kaaba, and no serious effort was even made by the Government of Rateb Pasha to re-establish order and security. Nevertheless, the Grand Sherif did not protest ; and none of the deeds or misdeeds of the Young Turks aroused his wrath so much as their neglect to observe certain Islamic traditions, which were effete. But this very neglect is indeed a virtue in the Young Turks, for which they deserve the respect of right-thinking people.

The Sherif Husein, however, set it down against them, at the top of the list of corruptions and crimes, which he enumerated in his Declaration of Independence, issued

on the 27th of June, 1916. These crimes he divided into two classes : *i.e.* those that were caused by the Dastour (Constitution), and those that were the result of the War and the new reform policy of the Young Turks. In the second category he mentioned ' their neglect to enforce the Islamic laws,' ' the exemption of the soldiers from the fast of Ramadhan,' and ' the issuing of decrees which are contrary to what is set down in the Surat of the Cow.'[1] He then protested against the execution by Jamal Pasha of the Syrian notables and intellectuals in Damascus and Beyrout.

Nevertheless, the Sherif Husein's Declaration of Independence was considered as the spirit of the Arab Movement, the basis of Pan-Arabism. Have not the non-Muslem Arabs the right, therefore, to ask : What have we to do with a revolution which is based principally upon the Koran ? and what matters to us a movement in favour of the Surat of the Cow ? If we consider the Stamboul leavening lump in the life of the Sherif Husein, however, his political policy based upon a defence of the national religion, will seem plausible. But the exploitation of a religious emotion, even if it benefits a religion, which is, let us suppose, all truth and all beauty and all good, is nevertheless a regrettable thing.

His sincerity in protesting against the innovation of the Young Turks may be quite real ; but the wisdom in the protest at least is questionable. He said : Uphold the Arab Movement ! But he knew that one of its two principal supports consists of the Christians of Syria, who do not approve of the religious element in it, while the other is made up of the Syrian Muslems, the majority of whom sympathize with the Turks and applaud their religious reforms. Time is the best elucidator of truth ; for current events will eventually bring out the subtlest shades in shamming, as well as expose the most concealed in sentiment and purpose. The fact is that the Kings of Arabia

[1] The first chapter of the Koran.

will never progress, will never achieve a lasting success in anything, so long as they use religion as a means to political ends or even as a force for racial solidarity. King Husein, in his success and his failure, is a living and noble proof of what I say.

It does not seem possible that a man who was brought up among the old Turks, and who had imbibed their spirit and for many years practised their political methods, could free himself entirely of their faults ; and it is doubtful whether he could overcome his masters by fighting them with their own weapons, in the use of which they were certainly more skilled. Bear in mind also that the Turks themselves have in the past repeatedly declared a *jehad* against Christian Europe and have repeatedly failed. How can a *jehad*, therefore, by one Muslem political party against another ever succeed, especially these days ? It is indeed regrettable. For in spite of the triumph of the Arabs over the Turks, in Al-Hijaz and in Syria, even though achieved mainly by exciting the fanatical spirit of the tribes, the genius of the Turks, which had triumphed over the leader of the Movement and its chief, had in it the germs of failure and disappointment. And these germs had infiltrated the policy of King Husein.

He was called in the Hijaz Little Abdul Hamid. If the nickname is justifiable, the diminutive is not ; for relativity remains the unchanging law. Moreover, Mecca in the eyes of the Muslem people is greater than Constantinople ; and the dungeon of Mecca was in its effect as bad as the Bosphorus. It was worse because it was also the mother of terror. If King Husein, therefore, had any of the qualities of the Sultan Abd ul-Hamid, he certainly had the means of developing them intensely and to the highest degree.

CHAPTER XII

BETWEEN MECCA AND DOWNING STREET

KING HUSEIN and his two sons the Ameers Abdullah and Zeid were at dinner in the Palace at At-Taief, when one of the black guards entered, saying: 'A stranger at the door desires *Saiyedna*.' That stranger was a secret messenger, come to the Hijaz on the pretext of making a pilgrimage to Mecca; and he carried a message from the High Commissioner for Great Britain in Egypt, then Lord Kitchener, to the Sherif Husein, inviting him to join the Allies in the War. The Sherif at that time blankly refused. But later, when the successor of Lord Kitchener, Sir Arthur MacMahon, approached him on the same subject, he hesitated, but professed his friendship.

On the other hand, he was still maintaining a friendly attitude towards the Turks, although he did not go to Al-Medinah to pay his respects to Enver and Jemal when they came there on a visit of inspection in the early days of 1916. He had also advised the Turks not to join the Central Powers in the War; but he offered them none the less his support, after they had entered, on condition that the political prisoners of Syria and Iraq be set free and those two countries be declared autonomous. The Young Turks refused the conditions and insisted upon his support —upon conscription in the Hijaz. Whereupon the Sherif, who never disdained a political flirtation, went to a little village outside of Mecca, declaring his intention to retire from political life.

Followed the Jamal atrocities in Syria, where many

Syrian notables and intellectuals, suspected of affiliation with the Arabs and the Allies, were gibbeted in the public squares. The wrath of the Sherif was aroused, and he wrote to Jamal Pasha a letter of protest. Jamal replied in savage tones, 'Watch out for yourself instead of posing as the defender of others.' The Sherif renounced his former purpose and left the village to come back to Mecca—to political life. But his son the Ameer Faisal was then in Damascus, and lest he fall a prey to the ruthless Jamal, he made an effort to get him away from there before he attempted his *coup d'état.* He wrote therefore to Jamal saying that conscription had been declared and that the Arabs will join the forces of the Dowlah and her Ally Germany in their attack upon the Suez Canal, if he hastens to send the Ameer Faisal to Al-Hijaz for this purpose. Jamal was fooled. For Faisal was sent to Al-Medinah with ten thousand pounds and four thousand rifles to help his father conscript the Arabs.

Meanwhile, the English continued their political negotiations with the reluctant and friendly Sherif, sending in turn their Mr. Storrs, their Col. Hogarth, their Col. Lawrence to plead with him. Finally they agreed, the Grand Sherif accepting the Five Articles proposed in January 1916. These are as follows :

Article 1st.—The British Government agree to help in the formation of an Arab Empire completely independent in its internal and foreign affairs, bounded on the east by the Persian Gulf, on the west by the Red Sea, the Egyptian frontier and the Mediterranean ; on the north by the boundary lines of the two vilayets of Aleppo and Mosul to the Euphrates and the Tigris and down to the Persian Gulf. The Colony of Aden shall not be included in this State.

Article 2nd.—The British Government agree to protect this Empire against any interference in its internal affairs or any attack upon it in any form, by land or by sea ; and in case of an internal revolt, caused by the jealousy or the

intrigue of certain Ameers, England further agrees to help the new Government to suppress it. This latter agreement continues to be valid until the Arab Government has completed its internal organization.

Article 3rd.—The Government of Great Britain shall occupy the port of Basrah until the Arab Government is established and completely organized, making to said Government in return for said occupation a material compensation to be agreed upon by both parties.

Article 4th.—The Government of Great Britain agree to furnish this Arab Government with all its needs of arms and ammunition and money during the War.

Article 5th.—The British Government further agree to cut the railroad line between Anatolia and Syria in the neighbourhood of Mersine to keep back the enemy forces which are menacing Arabia.[1]

But the Grand Sherif Husein, who accepted in January 1916 these Five Articles, did not immediately begin to perform his side of the obligation. He still had to make certain preparations before declaring war against the Turks. Accordingly he wrote to the High Commissioner in Cairo, Sir Arthur MacMahon, who replied in a letter dated 10th March, 1916, saying :

> 'Your letter, dated Rabi' u 'Thani 14, 1334 (February 18, 1916), has been received, and we are pleased to know of the preparations you are making to meet the present situation. His Britannic Majesty's Government have approved of the same. They also acquiesce in all your demands, and everything you have asked for is sent with your messenger the bearer of this letter. The rest of the material will be ready as soon as possible, and will be in Port Sudan subject to your demand. We trust that you will inform us officially when the movement begins. . . . Certain rumours have reached us to the effect that our enemies are building ships for the purpose of sowing the Red Sea with mines. We hope you will hasten to let us know if there is any basis to this rumour.'

[1] The translation is made from the Arabic Document loaned to me by King Husein.

It was four months after this Anglo-Arab agreement was concluded that the Sherif Husein fired the first shot from his Palace in Mecca. The Hijaz, more than any other country in Arabia, had been suffering from the effects of the War. Its seaports had been blockaded, the pilgrimage had ceased, and what it had of foodstuffs had been mostly consumed. The country was threatened with famine; there were many cases of death by starvation. The Grand Sherif nevertheless could not act until his son the Ameer Faisal was out of danger—out of Damascus. Meanwhile, arms and ammunition and money began to pour in from Port Sudan, from the sources inexhaustible of a mighty Empire.

Early in the morning of the 2nd of June, 1916, therefore, the Grand Sherif, depending upon Allah, stood in the Palace balcony with a rifle in his hand and fired the first shot, which was echoed in Jeddah and At-Taief and Al-Medinah. The Revolution was declared. The Military forces under the leadership of his four sons were distributed and prepared. The Ameer Zeid attacked the citadel of Ajiad in Mecca; the Ameer Abdullah invested At-Taief; the Ameers Ali and Faisal were recruiting the Bedu to besiege the Turks in Al-Medinah and the Sherif Muhsin was commanding the army that marched upon Jeddah.

It was a supreme moment, and not without a touch of romance and anguish; for the youngest of the sons of the Sherif, the Ameer Zeid, was operating against the Turks in the citadel, while his Turkish mother was in the Palace subject to the fire of her own compatriots, whom she had often helped and with whom she never ceased to sympathize. But there was her son, and he was the bravest and most daring of his brothers. The Mecca citadel held out for a month, and then surrendered. At-Taief and Jeddah followed.

On the 16th of November of that year the Sherif Husein was elected King by the notables of Mecca and Jeddah, and he was recognized in the following month by England

and Italy and France as the King of the Hijaz. English and French squadrons also came to Jeddah to convey to His Majesty the congratulations of their respective Governments, and the French Admiral made a glowing speech in which he addressed King Husein as the greatest of all the princes and leaders of Arabia.

CHAPTER XIII

PAN-ARABIA

CONSIDERING the subject deeply and in a spirit of fairness, it is difficult to say who is the headspring of the calamity in the Arab Movement ; for the truth in the matter is not integral. On the contrary, we find it divided into four vital parts, which are incarnate in England, France, the Arab leaders, and the Arab people themselves. It is, indeed, a four-headed monster. But, to particularize, there is one reason for the failure, which stands out prominently alone, and that is secret diplomacy. To particularize further, the then secret understanding between England and France, or the Sykes-Picot Treaty, was a fatal blow to Pan-Arabian aspirations.

That Treaty was concluded on the 17th of May, 1916, or seventeen days before the Sherif declared war against the Turks. Indeed, while Sir Arthur MacMahon was negotiating with Mecca and pledging England's support of Pan-Arabia, Monsieur Georges Picot and Sir Mark Sykes had completed their nefarious scheme of dividing Syria and Palestine into political and economic zones—blue and red and brown zones, which are all to-day, considering the national interests, black zones of despair.

But the British Government did not readily and wholly approve of the Sykes-Picot Treaty ; for Sir Edward Grey, then Foreign Secretary, in a letter dated 15th May, 1916, to the French Ambassador in London, Monsieur Paul Cambon, referred to the sacrifice of considerable British interests and then said that as the Government of His

Britannic Majesty recognize the advantages to the general cause of the Allies . . . they are ready to accept the arrangement agreed upon, on condition that the Arabs join in the War and that the cities of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo be given to them.

But King Husein, after insisting on all of Syria, according to the first article in the Anglo-Arab Agreement, relinquished his right to Mersine and Alexandretta, and continued to claim the Lebanon littoral as well as the four Syrian cities. He also consented to the British occupation of Basrah, and acknowledged the *status quo* in Aden. In view of these facts, would it be right to say that were it not for the secret understanding between France and England, which preceded the Agreement between England and the Sherif, the Pan-Arabian dream would have been realized? No one doubts that the Sykes-Picot Treaty was fatal to the cause in the north—in Syria and Palestine, which are the intellectual headsprings of the movement; but it did not reach, in its destructive effects, the peninsula proper. This, however, is but half the truth.

The other half is that the Sherif Husein, whose interests were centred in Syria and Palestine, did not care a jot for the peninsula. And what's in the peninsula, but enemy Ameers, and rebellious tribes, and desert wastes? But Syria and Palestine have always been the Mecca of the Arab conquerors. It is necessary, therefore, that they be attached to Al-Hijaz, or that Al-Hijaz be attached to them. It mattered not which with the Sherif, who considered such an attachment sufficient for the fulfilment of his Pan-Arabian dream.

But this political process is much like building the roof of a house before the foundation is laid; and the foundation, to be sure, is not in Syria and Palestine, but in Najd and Al-Yaman and Asir. The foundation is in making up with enemy Ameers and putting down rebellious tribes. If King Husein had been able to gain them to his side and unite them under his standard, his would have been a

SULTAN AHMAD FADHL, BROTHER OF THE SULTAN OF LAHAJ.

A SHERIFIAN SOLDIER OF AL-HIJAZ

power before which all the opposition in the north would cease and all the colours of the political zones would disappear. But his failure in Syria and Palestine left him without any authority to speak of in the peninsula proper.

I realize what His Majesty had done for the cause before he became King of the Hijaz. In his shrewdness and tenacity of purpose, his boldness as well as his blandness of manner, while he was paving the way for the Revolution, the Revolution which he did not declare before he got the Allies to supply all his material needs—arms, ammunitions, foodstuffs, and money, and pledge themselves to his political programme—he doubtless rose to the height of achievement. But the King of Al-Hijaz wanted afterwards to become the King of Arabia, and there was nothing sound in his internal policy to justify such an ambition. He had a deep contempt for all the ruling Ameers of Arabia; and he even harboured hostile intentions towards some of them, as the second article of the Anglo-Arab agreement implies.

No matter how honourable were his political intentions during the War, therefore, they could not cover the multitude of sins that followed. And what avails the protests and the demonstrations? For even though he be 'the most ingenius and the most resolute of all the statesmen of the world,' he still was the prey of a perverseness which thwarted and often defeated his best wisdom. He could not see the skeleton behind the gilded illusion. Nay, he would not even face the facts. But he would build an Arab Empire out of the promises of a European nation in despair: he would create a Hashemite illusion and breathe into it the breath of life. His self-delusion was sublime.

Self-confidence, too, he had, and it was greater than that of the English. Why should they not be willing to help him crush a few jealous and bellicose Ameers around him? The second article in the agreement convinced him at first that they were ready and willing. But did the

English themselves think well before they approved? Could they not read the mind of King Husein, they who are so wonderfully perspicacious, where 'the revolt caused by the jealousy of certain Ameers' meant Ibn Sa'oud and the Idrisi, both their Allies? And would England take up arms against one of her Allies for the sake of another? Aside from this, would she or could she live up to an agreement which was nullified by the Sykes-Picot Treaty? It was a bargain made in a moment of sore need, that agreement; and King Husein, all his political acumen to the contrary, was certainly naïve to think that it could be carried out.

King Husein, however, had realized before the end of the War the difficulty, the impossibility almost of establishing an Arab Empire, which, in his heart of hearts, was to be Syrian foremost and under a Hashemite dynasty. Hence the letter of remonstrance and protest, which he wrote, three months before the Armistice, to his Britannic Majesty's High Commissioner in Cairo: 'And when you add to the foregoing,' says he, 'my inability to attain the results I had expected, it becomes absolutely necessary for me to resign.' . . . Again, while still insisting on the Five Articles in full: 'If the terms must be modified, I could do nothing but resign and retire from public life. . . . Great Britain doubts not that I and my sons are her friends, who remain unchanging in their steadfastness and sincerity. . . . You will then name the country where you will have us live . . . we are ready to leave . . . we welcome the exile,' etc.[1]

This attitude of King Husein remained the same, from the day he wrote that letter till the time I met him in Jeddah. He continued, in other words, to speak of abdicating and to plead for a united Arabia. The last time I went to the Palace to take leave of him, he said to

[1] King Husein abdicated in favour of his son Ali, 5th October, 1924; left Jeddah for Aqaba, 16th October; remained in Aqaba eight months, and in July 1925 he was removed by the British Government to Cyprus.

me solemnly, with his right hand on his beard : ' I do not desire it (the leadership), I do not desire it. Let the Ameers agree upon a leader and I will resign. Let them all agree to work for a united Arabia, an Arab empire, and I will withdraw, if they wish. I will even co-operate with them, whether I am to follow or to be followed—I say, O brilliant one, I will co-operate with them, whether I am to follow or to be followed.'

These words gave the impetus that day to one of the purposes of my travels and attracted me to the service of King Husein. I proceeded, therefore, in my national mission, seeking to pave the way for an understanding between His Majesty and the other ruling princes of Arabia.

PART II

WITH THE IDRISI IN ASIR

THE COUNTRY OF THE SID,[1] OR WHAT THE IDRISI RULES OF ASIR

BOUNDARIES.—The only known and undisputed boundary, at the time of writing, is the Red Sea from Abu Matneh, south of Kunfudha, to As-Salif, north of Luhaiyah.

Note.—In the days of the Turks, the Province of Asir included Abha, in the mountains, which is now in the hands of Ibn Sa'oud, and Luhaiyah, north of Hudaidah, which is now in the hands of the Imam Yahya.

POPULATION.—About a million souls.

AREA.—(What the Idrisi holds) About twenty thousand square miles.

Note.—The average width of Tihamah, from the Sea to the foot of the mountains of Al-Yaman and Asir, is about fifty miles. The distance to the foot of the hills from Kunfudha is about 75 miles; from Midi, 40 miles; from Hudaidah, 50 miles.

IMPORTANT TRIBES.—Rijal'ul-Ma', Masarihah, Benu Mirwan, the Qohra, Benu Hilal, Benu 'Abs.

IMPORTANT TOWNS.—Sabia, Jaizan, Midi, Abu 'Arish.

SECTS.—Of the Sunnah: Shawafi'; of the Shi'ah: Dodekans and Isma'ilis; of other religions: Parsis, Jews and Hindus.

[1] Abbreviation of Saiyed.

CHAPTER I

HUDAIDAH

FROM the north of France to Hudaidah on the Red Sea ! The spectre of the war silently greeted us, as we entered the city, and followed us through its streets till we had approached the precinct of authority and power. There he stopped, and we forgot him as one might forget a pestering beggar. We were in no mood for ruins.

But at the Palace of the British Agency, which was occupied by Dr. Muhammad Fadl'ud-Din, I.M.S., we were greeted silently, on the second floor, by another spectre standing in front of the iron safes that line the wall —the spectre of the sinews of war, the spectre of gold. We were passing through the deserted quarters of the Imperial Ottoman Bank.

Up to the top floor we ascended, feeling very much like spectres ourselves, and we stood before an imposing double door of teak wood exquisitely carved, which was opened by Dr. Fadl'ud-Din himself. The reception was warm, although a bit official ; but the long reception hall, with its Persian rugs, its Indian furniture, its decorated walls, its painted ceiling, its harim balconies, its deep alcoves, spoke eloquently in the most Oriental manner of the welcome that would have been accorded us in its halcyon days. Here again was a silent greeting ; for from the balconies and the alcoves issued the spectres of voluptuous joy.

This Palace was built for one of the wealthy citizens of Hudaidah, whose taste ran to art as well as to slave-girls.

The carvings on the doors, the windows and the screens, done by an Indian artist, testify to a rare skill. The motive throughout is the pine cone, and the designs are lace-like and exquisite. In the reception hall is a varied beauty in enamel, in gold lettering, and in plaster. The latter is simple and dignified ; but the ceiling, done in panels of red, green, white and blue designs, which are repeated on the rafters, is cluttered and exhausting. Immediately under the ceiling is a zone in gold with verses from the Koran. The genius of three nations, it seems, has contributed to the decorative designs. The ceiling is Chinese ; the woodwork is Indian ; and the dedals and letterings are Arabic.

The owner of this Palace had a harim, of course, but not one among the women was a legal wife. He would not marry an Arab girl, because her mother, he used to say, would get his soul and her father would get his fortune. So he confined himself to slave-girls from the Sudan as well as from Abyssinia and Zanzibar. He always kept from ten to twenty—the harim quarters extended into the next block—and kept them clothed in silks, of which, however, they required but little. For he also kept them confined under the celestial glamour of Chinese art, behind the magnificence of Indian screens, and within the four walls of Koranic arabesques. Life ? This is life, as visioned by the Prophet. But when they did desire a change, at least for their eyes, he invited other slave-girls and noted singers from Egypt, who would sing and dance in the grand reception hall and minister to his caprice, while they looked on from the screened balconies above. Life ? What more of life did they desire ? The people of Hudaidah still say that he was the most benevolent slave-holder in Tihamah. But when the Destroyer of Delights knocked at his door he had little left but this Palace, having assiduously dissipated his fortune, and not a black seed to whom to bequeath it. He therefore named one of his servants, also a slave, as his residuary legatee.

Thus the Imperial Ottoman Bank before the War and the British Government their successors had a black slave for a landlord, who only charged them a rent of twenty-five Marie Theresas ($12) a month. For this reason, as well as for the esthetic gratification the place afforded, I did not hesitate to decide, when Dr. Fadl'ud-Din offered me the choice of living with him or going to the house he had prepared for us. There can be nothing better than this in all Hudaidah, said I to myself; and then to mine host: 'What is good for you is certainly good for us.' We were welcomed again; and from that hour we became his associates in what may be considered a luxurious dwelling, not only by wild mountaineers like ourselves, but by travellers from beyond the sea.

Very brave, indeed, was Dr. Fadl'ud-Din to accept us in that state; for when I saw my face in a glass, the first time since we left San'a, I shuddered. My hair was as bushy as an Asiri's, and my beard might have shocked a Bolshevik. But our host had sent for an Indian barber and ordered the *hammam*, so that in a couple of hours we were again deserving of the amenities of life. To eat at a table with silver plate, to have a pressed napkin, to be served by a servant in a clean white garment, to look into a water bottle with pure water in it, these gave me a thrill of delight which is only possible in a first experience; but not until I had ordered my bath the morning of the following day, did I feel like an Englishman in full possession. English occupation? Here was an example of it. But it only lasted a month.

Moreover, if that defunct Muslem sybarite and his *huris* could have seen us, they would certainly have been shocked at our conduct. I should not perhaps include myself with my host, who is also a Muslem and shares a common privilege. But the difference between the two Muhammadans is noteworthy. Dr. Fadl'ud-Din preferred to be remembered, he told me, by one in the Punjab who questioned the stars of India for a message from the Red

Sea ; there too was a little one who would run out to the garden to pick for his mother the flower of remembrance. Indeed, my host is a perversely monogamous Muslem, and sentimental withal. He would not take another wife, although he had been three years away from home ; and while medicine is his profession and politics his occupation, he has a spirituality of rare significance. He admires Ghandi and can quote passages from Macaulay's essay on Warren Hastings. In other words, he is a liberal in Indian politics, a Labour supporter in England.

No place in Tihama is more conducive to discussion and contemplation than the housetops in the evenings ; and the Palace had many roofs, one above the other, which we used for different subjects. Where we had tea, in front of the reception hall, we discussed literature ; where we had dinner, we discussed politics ; where I slept, the roof of the room I occupied—the room that has a balcony overlooking the reception hall—we reserved for Arabia and India ; and above it, the top roof on which stands the harbour light, was the vantage place from which we tried to penetrate into the rim of the universe. But there was no hard and fast rule ; and the rambling mood was often supreme. Sufism, Ghandism, Al-Islam, eugenics, the American girl —here is a range. Fadl'ud-Din has not the point of view of the foreigner, especially the Oriental, about the American woman. He does believe that she is wonderful ; and I have related only of such—including Mary Baker Eddy and Amy Lowell—as would confirm his enthusiasm. 'They certainly achieve things,' he once said. 'And men,' I added. He did not understand, and I kindly left him in his ignorance. But there was a fly in the honey. I was obsessed with spectres ; spectres of *huris* hovering in the Palace, spectres of gold haunting the old bank, spectres of the War in the ruins of the city.

Hudaidah was bombarded twice in ten years ; first by the Italians, in the Turko-Italian War (1911), who fired at the barracks only, and the second time by the English

(1918), as a part of Allenby's final drive against the enemy in Syria and Palestine. But the English did the work thoroughly; they even fired at their own consulate and destroyed it. The Consul himself was on board one of the cruisers and he saw that his house got the necessary share of shells.

The English occupied the city, and they were expected to make some reparation to those who suffered from the bombardment; but they soon turned it over to the Idrisi and thus shifted the obligation. The Idrisi will pay. The Idrisi? He himself wanted reparation; and after his Government was installed in Hudaidah, he realized that the English were not going to crown the gift with a few bags of gold, and he put the screws on a poor suffering population. The demand for reparations ceased, and Hudaidah begged for mercy. But the *zakat*-money must be paid, and the Man of Jaizan had a new sytsem of collecting it; also, as an auxiliary, a mild instrument of torture. Not 2½% according to the Koran, but a lump sum was imposed on every town or village or tribe; which sum was apportioned by the sheikh or the Government official; and he who refused to pay his share was tied to an iron post until he became sensible. No whip or hot rod was used. Nevertheless, Hudaidah protested; but the British authorities at Aden could only remind its people of the plebiscite. You've had your choice.

This plebiscite deserves notice. When the English bombarded the city and landed Indian troops, the people thought it meant British occupation, and the merchants, particularly the Hindus, were pleased. But the Imam Yahya was then protesting against the occupation, and the Residency at Aden, which was coquetting with him, changed its tactics. That Hudaidah in those days did not want the Imam was quite clear; there was no harm, therefore, in treating it to a plebiscite. There may be even good in giving the Imam an unsugared pill.

But the majority of the merchants wanted the Turks

back, which shocked the plebiscite officials. When questioned again, they said : 'If not the Turks, then the Government of Egypt.' Which surprised them. The Idrisi was no more popular than the Imam. But the gentlemen of the plebiscite would not stand upon such a result. The merchants of Hudaidah are only a small minority of the population, half of which at that time, having fled from the bombardment, was still away. The plebiscite was therefore postponed. Meanwhile, the Idrisi's Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief, at the head of a single regiment, entered the city.[1]

Another curious but fatal result of the plebiscite. The merchants or their spokesmen had openly expressed their choice, which was implicitly anti-Idrisi. So when his Government was established, his 'Amil sent for the members of the merchants' delegation and asked them to pay a visit to the *Saiyed* at Jaizan. They did not refuse ; but like all Turkified Arabs of the Red Sea coast, they were lavish in their excuses and compliments. They needed a few days to make the necessary preparations. They knew, however, what the visit implied, and they planned instead to leave Hudaidah. But before they did so, the 'Amil sent for them again, gave them a lecture on loyalty and obedience, and told them to go home. It ended happily, they thought, as they were going out ; but at the gate, they were seized by soldiers, put on the backs of mules, and driven directly to Jaizan, a journey of four days. No time was given them to change their clothes, no permission to ask questions, no chance to bribe and escape. Straight to Jaizan ! And there they were locked up in the castle for seven months, before the Grand Saiyed granted a hearing, before they were told in fact of the crime—*lèse-majesté*—and the penalty.[2] Those that could paid it in money ; and

[1] This was in January 1921. In April 1925 Hudaidah was occupied by the Imam Yahya.

[2] See Part I, chapter ix. p. 87, how another crime of *lèse-majesté* was punished.

the others had to give hostages as security for loyalty and obedience. Thus ended a plebiscite in Arabia.

It was not Dr. Fadl'ud-Din who told me all these things ; nor would I embarrass my host with questions. But the Palace was open to any one that came to see me, many of whom, it is true, had personal grievances. A few were impartial, however, and among these were two—an Egyptian and a Syrian—whose information was on the whole authentic.

I do not think that the Jews have any advantage over the Syrians. My Syrians ! I have found them everywhere —merchants on a lonely island, gamblers in the Riviera, craftsmen in Algiers, theological students in Italy, mercenaries in the Greek Army, contrabandiers in Al-Hijaz, quarantine doctors in Port Sudan, brokers in Massowa, bankrupt gentlemen in Djibuti, adventurers in Abyssinia, interpreters in Aden, philanthropists in Lahaj, and even in the highlands of the Yaman, once Excellencies in the service of the Turks. My wandering Syrian I have also found in Hudaidah, with a claim against the French Government which he could not collect. Five years he was kept on the job as acting consul—he was previously the interpreter—and then forgotten. 'Is not France paying her debts?' he asked me. 'I know she is not paying America,' I replied. She was not at that time.

My indomitable Syrians, everywhere have I found them a little above the trodden level, with their heads in the air, but their eyes ever on the main chance. They make the best interpreters in the world, whether in literature or in politics ; interpretation is their business—a part of their political game—and it can be made more profitable than an embroidery factory in Madeira. I say nothing of the trouble an official interpreter can stir up between nations, the intrigues he can cultivate, the misunderstandings he can foster and materialize. But my Hudaidah Syrian was a victim none the less—perhaps of his own machinations ; and better than the French Government were the Arabs,

who took him into their faith and gave him one of their daughters. Yes, a Catholic of Catholics—a Maronite of Mt. Lebanon—he turned Muslem ; and when I saw him, he was the father of two children, 'members of the catholic faith of the future,' as he called them. But their mother he had to keep veiled ; she in fact insisted upon it, being of a good family. 'Even if I ask her to come out to see you,' he said to me, when I was his guest at dinner, 'she would refuse.' Dr. Fadl'ud-Din liked this Syrian ; but he did not think that his conversion—or his apostasy —was a serious matter.

There is in Hudaidah a certain tolerance of religious defection or deflection ; not less interesting than a Maronite turned Muslem, is the marriage of an Isma'ili to a Shafi'i girl. Dr. Fadl'ud-Din received an invitation to the wedding ceremony. But he did not care to go and he resorted to the ready excuse of having guests. He said with a feeling of gratitude, when he showed me the written invitation, that I had saved him from 'a boring thing.' Now a Muhammadan wedding in an Isma'ili [1] mosque was not to me 'a thing,' and whether, as a novelty, it was boring or not, I did not know. But I was quite willing to take the chance. I was eager, in fact, to go, and there was no circumlocution about it. The joke was on Fadl'ud-Din, who had to write another note saying that he will come. The guest that should have saved his host, led him in the end to slaughter.

It was on the roof of the mosque, which was spread with rugs and lighted with Chinese lanterns ; the invited guests, about two hundred, were seated on square cushions all around in a perfect square ; and in the middle of the front line sat the Sheikh who performed the ceremony. To his right was the bridegroom and to his left, the father of the bride. In the centre of the square, on a large table, were baskets of jasmine flowers and others of bonbons wrapped

[1] The Isma'ilis in Hudaidah, about fifty only, and all from India, are of the Bohra sect.

in coloured paper. As soon as we arrived, every one rose in honour of Dr. Fadl'ud-Din, who was virtually the Governor of the city, and after taking our seats and exchanging salaams, the ceremony started.

It was simple and dignified. The Sheikh took the hand of the bridegroom and that of the father of the bride, joined them together, covered them with a silk cloth, and began : 'Do you give me your daughter in lawful marriage, pursuant to the faith of Al-Islam, the tenets of the Prophet, etc. . . . ?' The bridegroom repeated the words as the Sheikh uttered them ; and then, 'I give thee my daughter in lawful marriage, etc. . . .' which were repeated by the father of the bride, who afterwards made a little speech, directing his words first to the bridegroom and then to the guests. The Sunnis and the Isma'ilis are of the same faith, he said, followers of the same Prophet, and there is nothing to prevent them from intermarrying. After the speech, some women in a neighbouring house, who were apparently watching the ceremony, uttered an ululu of joy. The jasmine bouquets—the little flowers were stuck on palm stems—were then distributed to the guests, and conversation was in order. A little later the servants went around with the baskets of bonbons, and the guests, each with a package in his hand, began to leave.

The bride, who remains at her father's home, is not, as a rule, delivered to the bridegroom till a week or ten days after the marriage ceremony. Her jewellery has to be bought, her trousseau has to be prepared ; and the *mahr*-money, which is paid by the bridegroom, usually on the day of the marriage ceremony, is used for this purpose. These matters are agreed upon between the parents of the marrying couples.

'Not very exciting,' said Fadl'ud-Din, as we walked out, 'is it ? But when the bride is taken from her parents' home to that of her husband, then there is some noise—tom-toms and dancing clowns and shrieking women.'

The heat that evening was intense ; but about midnight

a breeze rose to temper a stinging and burning atmosphere. It gradually cleared the sky and gave the stars their accustomed brilliance. Like everybody else in Hudaidah, I slept on the roof; and in a moment of ecstasy—the calm and unresisting sea, the might and the splendour of the universe!—I surrendered myself, body and soul, to the night. Nothing must intervene between me and the stars. The cool caressing breeze enveloped me with peace ineffable, lulled me to sleep. But I got up in the morning with terrible pains, and the first thing I saw was the cat with a rat held lovingly between her paws. I was the rat in the paws of the treacherous breeze. The hawks that soared above the roof were of a different temper. One of them held his breakfast between his feet and was nibbling at it, as he circled above my bed. He did not play with his victim. 'God's in his heaven, and all's right with the world.' But what a persistent companion is stupidity. You beat her away with the stick of wisdom, and she comes back riding on the broom of forgetfulness. If only we could remember every day's lesson!

What are the troubles of an individual, however, compared to those of a nation, a chain of nations stupefied by a religious tradition? We are still, I beg you to remember, in Ramadhan, even though its last day. But this last day as well as the first is never the same with Muslem peoples everywhere; and they will not regulate it by the calendar. They refuse the benefits of astronomical science, because of the tradition that only through the testimony of two witnesses, who must testify before a judge that they have seen the first glimmer of the Ramadhan moon, is the first day of the fast ascertained. Besides, the traditional witnesses are, as a rule, one-eyed. But what can even a hawk-eyed mortal see of the first of the moon on a cloudy day? Indeed, atmospheric conditions may rob a whole nation of a slice of its Ramadhan cake in Paradise.

We had ours in Hudaidah a day before the people of San'a. It stands to reason, that, given a clear day in both

places, the first glimmer of the Ramadhan moon, before it sinks in the water on the western horizon, is observed a day earlier on the coast than it is up in the mountains east of it.

With us, however, it had ended the first day of our occupation of the Palace. Besides, there was nothing Ramadhanish about the table of Fadl'ud-Din, which was set regularly in the daytime ; and it could even boast of certain luxuries, which are very rare in Tihamah. I have referred in this chapter to pure water. There is no such thing on the coast of the Red Sea up to, at least, fifty miles back of it. The luxury of water ! We had three kinds at the Palace ; namely, Hudaidah water, brackish and whey-coloured for bathing ; condenser water from the Island of Kamaran,[1] the quarantine station for pilgrims coming from the East, for cooking ; and Nile water from Suez for drinking. But this latter was also warm, alas ! and no night breeze of sea or mountain could cool it a bit. Only Kamaran could do it ; and with their condenser water, the angels of mercy there sent us every few days a block of ice. Yes, we had something besides water to drink (a British Political Officer must also have a supply of drugs). Aye, the vial on the table was made to yield, with the aid of a syphon-bottle and sugar, a delightfully effervescent, amber-coloured drink—ginger ale !

Another daily luxury were the early dates, like the early grapes of Tihamah. For a town in the Bora' hills, about fifty miles away, produces a fruit superior in quality to that of the best of Basra's and is two months ahead of it. For there is a difference of quality even in dates. The Arab epicure prefers them in the state of what is called *manasif*, that is, one side of the fruit ripe and the other side half-ripe. The date *manasif* has therefore two colours, a deep brown and a bright yellow ; thus, while a part of it has the bite, the other has the sugar ; and the epicure gets in one fruit the two qualities combined.

[1] It is about 100 miles north-west of Hudaidah.

A box was also coming from India ; and Fadl'ud-Din announced, the evening of the Ramadhan festival, that *inshallah* it will arrive in time. We were not disappointed ; for by means of a P. and O. steamer from Bombay, a relay at Aden, and a dhow from Kamaran, a box of mangoes, the most delicious of Indian mangoes, was delivered at the Palace. . . . The end of Ramadhan ! Give me a glass of ice water, boy !

A FISHMONGER IN JEDDAH.

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CHAPTER II

WEEDS OF FAITH AND OTHER SORRY THINGS

THE roofs of Hudaidah, the night of the festival, were brilliant with lights and vibrant with the spirit of jubilation. Children danced holding hands, men chanted verses from the Koran, girls ran about showing their holiday dresses, and here and there were heard the strains of mundane music and song. I too, having shared the month's privations and dissipations with the Zioud, had a right to celebrate.

On the morning of the first day of the festival, therefore, I donned my gala dress, which consisted of a beduin robe with tapering sleeves, a pair of Zaidi sandals, a Mecca belt and a dagger, a plum-coloured *sumadah* of Indian silk and a Sherifian *ighal* of gold thread, and I went down to call upon my host.

In the grand reception hall are deep window-seats furnished as diwans, and one of these, which opens on the sea, was used by my friend as his private study and watch tower, as well as his throne on reception days. After going early to the mosque that morning, he sat there, wearing his voluminous multicoloured Indian turban, to receive visitors. Before him on the carpet were several books, one of which, a fat tome on the Fungi, he was translating from English into Hindustani ; also a spy-glass which helped him to keep a watchful eye for slave dhows and pirates.

I salaamed in the name of Allah, and congratulated him ; and he, struck with amazement and admiration—it was the first time he saw me in this attire—gave me the

privilege of sharing his throne. But the conversation, strange to say, had nothing to do with Ramadhan. Taking up the tome he was translating, he said : ' Some one ought to write a book on the fungi of religions.' Thus were we again on our favourite subject—Sufism and the Universe. But while he was saying something about the insignificance of crowns and turbans—the insignificance of outward forms—to the Sufi, the servant announced the Governor of Hudaidah, who came in with his secretary, the military escort remaining outside. He, an uncle to the Idrisi, seemed to illustrate the insignificance of authority when it is but an outward form. A turbaned Sheikh of genial humour and intellectual unimportance, he made me think the more of Fadl'ud-Din, who deserved a higher post than being even the substance of authority in his shadow. But Sufism and politics do not use the same measuring rod.

What to me was most amazing in that Ramadhan reception, however, had little to do with Sufism or politics. The visitors seemed no more of Arabia—citizens of an Arab town—than the pedestrians of the Muski in Cairo or of Galata Bridge in Constantinople. Merchants and saiyeds, sheikhs and officials, learned men and boatmen, they seemed to come from everywhere but Arabia—from Syria, Egypt, the Sudan, Somaliland, India, Java, Persia and Turkestan. They represented moreover the various Islamic sects as well as many of the religions of mankind ; for there were among them, the Shafi'i, and the Hanafi, the Zaidi and the Isma'ili, the Christian and the Jew, the Parsi, the Bohra, the Bunya—people who worship the fire, others who worship the cow, and still others who worship the divinity of nothingness—Nirvana. And what an array of dress and undress ! From the loin cloth to a multiplicity of flowing robes, from sandals to pointed slippers to spurred boots, from the *ighal* to the turban to the taj, from the striped silk tunic to the diaphanous smock to nothing—a cinema scene of the nationalities of the Orient.

A lesson too for the student of ethnology and the pro-

tagonists of the melting pot. There is scarcely a pure type among all these people, and the result of the mixture of bloods is appalling. The original identity is seldom wholly lost; India and Java, China and Somaliland, Persia and the Sudan have all contributed, within the Koranic law or without—in joy, in adventure, in despair, in crime—to this heterogeneous population of Hudaidah; and they all remain, a damning evidence, a fragmentary and disfiguring abomination, upon the scene. An Arab sherif with Sudanese blood; a Yamani come out of a Java mould awry; a Persian crossed on a Somali; the beautiful hand of Arabia pointing grievously to almond eyes; and flat nostrils and thick lips pronouncing the pride of birth; not one of mixed blood, in all Tihamah, that vindicates, from a physical or a moral point of view, the theory of intermarriage. Half-breeds, quarter-breeds, no-breeds, I salute your sartorial glamour and splendour.

Not even does it prove this sorry mess, the idea of the melting pot. Religiously (in the Orient religion is still above nationality), in spite of the blood that should have a tendency to draw them together, they remain as far apart as if they were of the pink of orthodoxy in their own land.

One afternoon, when we were having tea, a Bunya—one of those Hindus who wear voluminous trousers of white gauze, which lap around the legs but do not cover them—came to visit the Political Officer, and I was asked to offer him a cup of tea. I did; but the Bunya refused it. Dr. Fadl'ud-Din then offered it to him, and again it was refused. Why? Because it is contaminating to drink or eat anything made by a Christian or a Muslem, by anyone, in fact, who is not of his own cult.

But Zarathustra had a following in Hudaidah, which consisted of one Parsi, and he came to tea almost every day. Khan Bahadour cooed English like a bird; and he dressed like a gentleman of India in a frock-coat that buttons under the chin, over white trousers as wide at the bottom as a sailor's. His religion, too, he wore in the same

modern, pressed but loosely hanging, fashion; and the only traditional garment that adhered to him was his baptismal shirt, the end of which was visible when he sat down. The *sudra* (right path), as this is called, is made of very light material, in two pieces sown on the sides, to symbolize the two worlds; and on the breast it has a small pocket called *kis-sawab*, or the bag of right thoughts and right deeds.

'But the bag is empty, Mister Ameen; there is nothing in *kis-sawab*. You see, I am here alone. Twenty years I have lived among people who know not the beauty of our religion. They think I worship the sun. But who can worship the sun in Hudaidah? They are human beings like myself, I say to myself: why then should they not know the truth? It is very bad to be one among fifty thousand. I begin to think that they are right—that our religion has no spiritual beauty. . . . Once I used to worry about my tower of silence. No temple for the lonely Parsi, no tower for his bones. I don't worry any more. If the great God concerned himself about the truth he would not keep it locked up in the safe of Kawasji. . . .[1] Sometimes, I tell you the truth, Mister Ameen, sometimes I worry, and that is why I keep the *sudra*.'

'In India, they make us adopt their dress, also their language—even the staling of the cow in the act of purification—baptism. The Parsis, Mister Ameen, adopt everything. In Hudaidah, there are Muslems and Bunyas —before the war, there were also many Christians and Jews—and I adopt everything. I become Muslem, Bunya, Christian, Jew, and a good-for-nothing Parsi. Pray? I suppose I should pray with everybody, but what time will I have for Messrs. Kawasji if I do? . . . Do you know, Mister Ameen, that the Jews and the Muslems and the Christians are all our brothers—brothers of the Parsis? How? We all go back to Abraham and Zoroaster. You

[1] He was the Agent in Hudaidah of the Kawasji S.S. Co. of Aden (the Kawasjis are Parsis).

are a learned man, Mister Ameen, but do you know who was Abraham? Abraham is Zoroaster himself, and Zoroaster is Abraham.[1] When our Prophet was persecuted in Persia, he changed his name and fled to Arabia and Palestine. Am I not right to be with everybody? But I keep the *sudra*, as you see, and *kis-sawab* will not always remain empty. "*Allah karim*, *Allah rahim* (generous and merciful)," says my Muslem clerk (he pronounced it as do the English, "clawk"), and there will be a few good deeds and a few good thoughts in *kis-sawab* when I die, *inshallah*. If my "clawk" is on the right path, I am with him; if he is not, the right-path shirt is here, and so is the *kosti*. Good insurance policy for the other world, don't you think so, Mister Ameen? A policy of the Corporation of all Religions, better than the Insurance Company that insures the steamers of Messrs. Kawasji—don't you want a couple of shares in it, Mister Ameen?'

I told you what the *sudra* is. The *kosti* is even more important. When the Parsi child is seven years of age, he is baptized in the staling of the cow and the *kosti*—the belt, the bond of faith—which is a white tape woven of the wool of the lamb by the wives of the priests, is wound around the waist and tied loosely three times, in front and at the back, while repeating the formula: good thoughts, good words, good deeds. Now, when any of these are sufficiently tangible for the spirit, they are placed in *kis-sawab*, the bag of righteousness—a saving bank of the soul. A good thought for an evil day.

'It's a big bag, Mister Ameen,' pointing to the stamp-sized pocket, 'and empty. But *Allah karim*. Khan Bahadour will die in Hudaidah and will be left on the beach to be eaten up by the hawks. But the Muslems and the Christians and the Hindus will pray for him—they will all put something in *kis-sawab*. The Corporation of

[1] This is a curious theory about Abraham. But I have also heard a pundit in India say that Buddha is the tenth incarnation of Abraham, the Friend of God.

Religion for the Insurance of Eternal Life—the President is Allah. Will you not be insured, Mister Ameen ? '

Indeed, the more I learn about the religions of mankind, the more I become like my Parsi friend, poly-religious. Like Dr. Fadl'ud-Din, too, I would have the fungi of religions described and classified for the safety of man. Wholesome, for instance, are the fungi of our facetious Parsi ; most poisonous those of the Bunya who refused a cup of our tea.

But in our discussions on the top roof of the Palace in the moonlight—delightful moments of spiritual and intellectual contact !—we rose above the fungi, even above the cedar grove of religions. Fadl'ud-Din is both philosopher and Sufi, practical and idealistic ; his consciousness is a fine blend of East and West ; and as an Indian Muslem, he represents a culture which is not wholly Islamic. Indeed, the cultured Muslems of India have much in them of the mysticism, even the occultism of the country that was Buddha's before it became partly Muhammadan. It filters invisibly, unconsciously through their souls. But Fadl'ud-Din does not like to be called a Muhammadan. He is a Muslem ; and the difference is essential. ' The Prophet is dead,' said Abu Bakr, the first Khalif, ' but Allah liveth for ever. And Allah,' continued Fadl'ud-Din, ' gave us Al-Islam, through Muhammad, who was but a messenger, an apostle. Why make so much of the apostle, therefore, why raise him even above the Koran, above the essential truth of religion ? '

' Do you believe in Al-Jannat as described in the Koran ? ' I asked.

' No more than I believe in the hell that is described by one of the great Christian poets, Dante. The letter killeth, the spirit quickeneth.'

' Do you believe in reincarnation ? '

' Perhaps. But I do not like to come back to this earth, this life. . . . I wonder sometimes if there *is* life, and if it is higher or lower than ours, in those stars.'

'The limitations of the human intellect are terrible. It fills me with gloom to think that above a certain height or under the water down there, the mind that can measure the distance between that planet and ours must perish inevitably.'

'But don't you think that the intellect thus destroyed frees the spirit and gives it the wings of a new life. In garments not of the flesh, in the consciousness of a super-ego, might not our disembodied intelligence go on, beyond the limitations that fill you with gloom? Might it not in a progression of reincarnations make greater discoveries and conquer greater material forces? The intellect, my dear Rihani, is the jailer of the spirit. How often have I felt its power, its tyranny!'

'But what proof have we of the existence of this separate entity, in spite of its detachment, of what you call its jailer, the intellect?'

'I imagine it exists by reason of this detachment and not in spite of it. But you ask me for proof. I have no proof. I have an assurance—the assurance of the light of those stars—the assurance of the order that keeps them in their orbits—the assurance of the mind behind or within this order. To me, this is the divinity which is in us and around us. Yes, life is a ray of divine light imprisoned in an ego, an intellect, and it regains its universal and eternal quality in death. Might not our souls be a part of that power—magnetic, electric, ethereal, whatever it be—that keeps those stars together and apart?'

'Our souls are moths, then, that float around the lights of heaven and are not burned?'

'Moths of the spirit, mighty in co-ordination, in the harmony of movement. I read once about a Chinese philosopher who dreamed one night that he was a butterfly flitting in the garden of delight, from flower to flower; and when he woke up in the morning, disappointed and perplexed, he asked himself: What am I in reality—a butterfly dreaming that he is a man or a man dreaming

that he is a butterfly? Moths in the garden of the universe like butterflies in the garden of delight: these are no more hurt by the flowers than those are by the stars.'

'But these stars, science tells us, are nothing but masses of fire and mud—blind forces. They give out light, but they do not guide.'

'Where there is light, there is guidance; but the value of it is commensurate with our understanding. A light-house to a firefly is nothing probably but a big firefly on a hilltop. I may not have made my idea of light and eternal life clear enough. It is easier perhaps to think of man as a perishable symbol of an immortal reality—light; which reality is re-created every time its symbol is destroyed; and with every re-creation its powers increase. The symbol, too, conforms to the reality in its evolution, is imbued with it, is an instrument of it; for only thus are the great among men possible and explainable. This destruction and re-creation, this incarnation of the reality in the symbol and the concomitant growth of both, continue until the point of universal union, of cosmic and divine oneness is reached. That is what I understand by the Sufi's annihilation in the central point of the ultimate and eternal; there, he is embraced by God: there, the re-creation and reincarnation of that particular entity ceases for ever.'

'This is all very beautiful, but the mind says, Nay.'

'The mind is the enemy of intuition; it is the jailer, as I said, of the spirit.'

'And while we are in jail, would you say that intuition is the best nourishment for us?'

'When reason fails, yes. It also affords us the best solace.'

'But what is the difference between this intuition and religious illusions?'

'The same difference, I would say, between your belief in immortality and the belief of one of the servants in Al-Jannat.'

'The Paradise of slaves, would you call Al-Jannat?'

'A great Muslem philosopher (Al-Ghazzaly) has called it the Paradise of fools. I for one prefer to be a moth.'

'A moth of light drawn to the centre of the divine fire without being burned? I should like to share your preference. But I am willing while in jail to try a little of your food.'

On the following day my friend gave me a little book with a very long title, which indicated nothing of its purpose. But its author Ahmad ibn Idris, the founder of the Idrisi State in Asir, is counted by Fadl'ud-Din among the leading Sufis of Persia and Arabia. Strange things do happen in Tihamah, but the strangest is this temporal State of Ibn Idris—a Government based upon a *tariqah*, or a mystic cult.

Said Fadl'ud-Din, when he gave me the book: 'The people in their ignorance corrupt the teachings of this big man. They have raised him even above the Prophet Muhammad. When the sick come to me for treatment and they are cured, they thank Sheikh Admad. A woman comes groaning with pain and crying: 'Help me, O Sheikh Ahmad! Sheikh Ahmad! do not forget me.' It is most exasperating. I told one of these women once to go to Sheikh Ahmad for medicine. She then changed her cry, invoking Muhammad instead of Ahmad. "Neither Ahmad nor Muhammad, thou infidel woman," I said. "Invoke Allah only, depend upon Allah alone." But you cannot make them understand. They even deify their local sheikhs, and in their prayer circles they make religion ridiculous. They destroy Sufism by howling . . . a true Sufi cannot abide it. . . . Yes, there will be a *halaqah* (prayer circle) to-morrow evening. But I shall not go with you. . . .'

He sent his secretary and the chief of police instead. There are four or five *tariqahs* (Sufi cults) in Hudaidah, chief among which is the Marghaniyah, whose founder Muhammad ul-Marghani was a student of Ahmad ibn

Idris. The Sheikh of this cult had recently died, and the extraordinary *halaqah*, in which all the other cults participated, was performed in his memory at the Masjid of the Tree outside the city. There were about a thousand people present; the porticoes and the open court of the Mosque were furnished with mats, on which the people sat squatting or crosslegged. Many stood around the walls and under the arches. The sons of the deceased Sheikh and the leading members of his *tariqah* sat in a circle in the portico around a burning lamp, and one of them was reading, chanting the *manaqib*, when we arrived.

The *manaqib*, with which the ceremony begins, is a combined elegy and biography of the founder of the cult, corresponding to the Lives of the Saints, which are still read in the Oriental churches. Marghani's was a long biography; and it was with a sigh of relief when the people chanted in the end, Amen. But the biography was followed by a poem, which was also trying; and the chief of police groaned, as he wiped the sweat from his brow. . It's long, very long. The Sheikh needs prayers, and not poetry.' But when the poet was finished reading, he was followed by another of one of the other cults, who had a more musical voice and more art; at the end of each line, the people sighed aloud, in the same strain, taking up the intonation and prolonging it, much as a singer is applauded in the East. Nevertheless, there were signs of dissatisfaction; the congregation had enough of rhymes. The heat moreover was intense, the atmosphere was like a wet sponge, and the breeze was perversely still; but no one seemed to complain of the weather. The poetry is over—Amen!

Everyone now is standing, and the ushers push the people back and around, thus forming a large circle in double or triple rows behind each other, and about eight feet apart. One of the sons of the deceased Sheikh, standing in the centre, begins the performance. *La ilaha ill'Allah*, he utters in a slow measured accent, swaying his

body to and fro, and the people holding hands do likewise. The chanting and swaying continue in the same measure for a few minutes, and then the leader, who moves back and forth between the two ends of the huge half-circle, claps his hands and changes the tempo. *La ilaha ill' Allah*, quick and vigorous, the swaying of the body corresponding; and after the fourth degree had been reached, the velocity, in speech and movement, becomes undistinguishable. The leader himself, who gives the cue, has to put on speed at times to catch up with the ecstasy. It is in his power, however, to bring the circle to a dead stop whenever he likes ; but the regulation programme is as a rule strictly observed. Having reached the utmost velocity, they come back gradually to the first measure.

Whereupon, the leader retires, and another takes his place. The cry is changed, and with it throughout is a pleasant undertone—the chanting of poetry by a group of boys. *Haiyum qaiyum* ! is the cry, that is, *Al-Haiy* (the Living), *Al-Qaiyum* (the Mighty) ; and it begins in a slow measure, a stately ⏑ – ⏑ – rhythm, progressing to an eager amble, and ending in a rapid, absorbing and thrilling pace. The cry becomes a grunt, the words are no longer intelligible ; and the bodies in motion, swift and regular, are like the shafts of an engine at top speed. The leader begins to foam at the mouth, and many of the devotees go into ' the state ' (*al-hal*) of ecstasy divine. *Haiyum qaiyum*, from start to finish, lasted thirty minutes.

Even as each cry progresses in measure and intensity, so too the rounds. The deceased Sheikh had three sons, it seems, and the youngest, a dusky boy of about ten in a green jubbah and a multicoloured turban, stepped, after the second round, into the circle. He was the star of the evening. Not only the stranger, but the regular *halaqah* attendants were amazed at his performance. There were no preludes, no slow, somnolent measures ; and his cry, one word only, *Al-Haiy* (the Living), was uttered with alarming energy. Already people began to sway and

stagger as if drunk; and the black boy-sheikh, in his sinuosities and contortions—he was supposed to be intoxicated with the divine grace—swept the *halaqah* off its feet. I am not speaking figuratively. For having started it at high speed, grunting *Haiy, haiy*! and doubling and shaking with ecstatic devotion, he clapped his hands and leaped into the air. Every one followed suit. He then began to hop. Every one did likewise. The engine was again at top speed and 'the state' was becoming fatal. One leaped out of the circle and tried to whirl, but he fell flat on his bosom in the first attempt. He was picked up and carried out. Another followed; and a third fell in front of the boy-leader, who stepped aside without taking any notice of him. But he too, become giddy with exhaustion, almost fell, and he was carried off the scene.

There was no break in the ecstasy, however, and the old sheikh that took the boy's place kept the *halaqah* on the wing. He changed the hop to a leap; and the spectators themselves, when they saw more than three hundred devotees leap in the air like one man, came under the spell. Some of them even joined the circle. Truly, no ballet corps could attain, through training and rehearsal, such co-ordination, such harmony, such clock-like movement. The most sophisticated *tariqah* student could no longer distinguish the cry. It was now a whoop, now a grunt, and at moments it sounded like the ruckle of death. Many old men, foaming at the mouth, exhibited remarkable energy under a temperature of 97 F. and Allah knows what humidity. One of these stepped into the circle and began, slowly, languidly to doff his clothes. The turban, the jubbah, the tunic were shed; but before he was in native buff he was carried out.

The stage of violence was now reached. One man leaped out of the circle—no Russian dancer could have done better—and knocked his head against the stone pillar. He fell bleeding and prostrate. Another intoxicated one,

who was being held by the more sober or less intoxicated, struck right and left, and turning a half somersault, came plump on his head. He got up instantly, and, standing in the centre, became rigid for a moment, and then like a log fell on his back. Another fight in the portico. The desire to violently meet Allah was being opposed by a violence more meditated and more successful. There, too, was a man knocking his head against a pillar, and out of the ranks leaped a Sudanese wildly gesticulating and shrieking, Allah, Allah ! The conducting Sheikh, who was also in danger of going off, bumped against him and the collision sobered both of them. This feature in intensity and violence lasted half an hour, during which almost every one was foaming, six or seven were fallen in a trance, a dozen or more had been carried out, a few were deterred from committing acts of violence upon themselves, and one was happy with a fatal wound.

Back to earth again. Kneeling on their haunches, with the palms of their hands flat upon their legs, they start again, in a calm incredible, to chant poetry, each group taking up the cue from the other. The chants are in Persian and Hindustani, as well as in Arabic. Meanwhile, people go up to where the sons of the deceased Sheikh are seated ; and as one of them, the eldest, is elected to succeed his father, they give him their suffrage Arab-fashion by shaking hands with him and saying : In the name of Allah and the Prophet, etc., we make you our Sheikh. Some of them in trouble ask him for spiritual help, for advice and guidance ; one man even asked him to prognosticate about the coming war of the world. Already he is a prophet, a wali, a miracle-man.

When the election is over, he is swamped to suffocation by those that would kiss his hand and ask his blessing. The Fatihah, or opening chapter of the Koran, in such circumstances, is the only salvation of the besieged. The new Sheikh, therefore, raised his hands, and one of his satellites cries out : Al-Fatihah. The word has a magical

effect. In a profound silence, the opening chapter of the Koran, a universal blessing, closes the performance, and then—pandemonium! Each one of the four or five different cults takes up its own standard and begins to sing to its own saint.

CHAPTER III

THE SUFISM OF IBN IDRIS

WHILE waiting for a reply from the Grand Saiyed to my letter, requesting permission to visit him in Jaizan his capital, I made the acquaintance of his great-grandfather, the founder in Asir of both a Sufi cult and an Idrisi State. The little book that was given to me by Dr. Fadl'ud-Din reveals a strange spiritual personality and tells the story of its illumination and peregrination in this our world. Which story I shall briefly relate.

Sufism has two great sources in the Islamic world, east and west; the first is in Persia, the second in Morocco; and out of the latter came into Arabia Ahmad ibn Idris, a descendant of the Prophet through the Hasan line. He was born in the year 1785, in 'Araish, a little village on the North African coast, in the district of Fas, where he pursued his studies; and he there began to teach also 'whatever God wished,' that is, those subjects which the Divine Power communicated to him through mediums and direct.

In the first stage of his illumination, Saiyed Ahmad frequented the circles of the Sufi sheikhs of his time; and when he was teaching in Fas, one of his pupils, Abd'ur-Rahman At-Tazi prophesied that the sun will one day shine upon Arabia from the West. He meant, of course, the sun of Sufism. Later he asked a friend of his, called Mujaideri, to bring Saiyed Ahmad to him; and when the two met, the pupil said to the teacher, 'You have found the door.' The teacher replied: 'Verily, I stand before

it now.' From that time on, At-Tazi became the Sheikh and Master, the guiding light, of Ahmad ibn Idrisi. Age is not a condition of illumination, and a true Sufi never hesitates to follow what he believes to be the light divine, even though it be in the path of a child.

Saiyed Ahmad followed, therefore, his former pupil Sheikh At-Tazi, nay, surrendered himself, his whole being, to him. But not wholly without reason. At certain moments, in what the Sufis call *hal* (abstraction) 'the eye of At-Tazi penetrated through the veil of mystery;' he could see the unseen and feel at a distance the effect of certain occurrences. He was, in other words, a clairvoyant. One day, when he was in Fas, he had a vision of the death of his friend Mujaideri in Shanqit; and here is how he analysed the matter to his pupil Saiyed Ahmad. When the teacher, or the first medium between the soul and the higher spiritual sources, turns his heart, in a moment of abstraction, towards one of his pupils, he sees him, no matter how far away he may be, in different states of light and darkness; 'now lighter, now darker, according to his conduct and obedience, according to how far or how near he is to God.' But when he beholds him in one unchanging state, he concludes that he is dead. The distinction is fine. It is not the substance evidently that he sees, but the aura, which, according to the Sufi, reflects the soul.

In spite of his clairvoyant power and his beneficent supernaturalism, At-Tazi was but the first medium to Saiyed Ahmad. He could lead him up only to a certain spiritual altitude, and thence he had to have another guide, whom even At-Tazi would follow. Aye, he himself had a Sheikh and Master, a guiding light, whose name was Abd'ul-Aziz ibn Mas'oud ad-Dabbagh, and who lived on this planet but thirty-six years, seventeen of which At-Tazi spent in his unbroken companionship.

Having told you how Saiyed Ahmad met At-Tazi, I shall now tell you how At-Tazi made the acquaintance of

Ad-Dabbagh. It was in the market-place, where they both traded at times for a living. At-Tazi was standing perplexed near a grain store, when Ad-Dabbagh approached him and whispered into his ear these words: 'Do not buy grain, but buy butter.' He even advised him to buy on such and such a day and sell a number of days later. At-Tazi did as he was told, and his profit was great. He went, therefore, to thank Ad-Dabbagh, who said unto him: 'My purpose goes beyond butter and grain: you should pursue a commerce in which you never shall lose.' 'How is that?' asked At-Tazi. 'Give away in alms,' Ad-Dabbagh replied, 'everything you possess, and follow me.' He did so, and from that day he became a devoted disciple of Ad-Dabbagh. It was through him that At-Tazi and Saiyed Ahmad met in Paradise Al-Khudhr [1] Abu 'Abbas, uncle of the Prophet Muhammad and the ultimate medium in all spiritual enlightenment; and after the death of the great Master, both of them often visited his grave and recited poetry.

'The love of thee hath grown upon the heart,
Even as the fingers grow upon the hand.'

'I loved you when an infant, when I knew not what is love,
And even now, when my hair is gray, my love's an infant still.'

It was At-Tazi, however, who figured most in the life of Ahmad ibn Idris; and whether through his teachings or the manifestation of his miraculous power, he was always the supreme master. Once when they were on a journey, At-Tazi was informed that his son had died. 'Go back,' said he to the messenger, 'and tell them not to bury the boy till I return.' Three days later he did return, and seeing his dead child, he addressed him thus: 'Who told thee to die? Arise, by the grace of Allah.' Whereupon the boy stood up alive. The author of the *Life of*

[1] Al-Khudhr is the Muhammadan St. George, the winged agent of divinity.

Ahmad ibn Idris tells of this, without any comment, as if it were an ordinary occurrence ; and I quote it as adumbrating the future healing power, at least, of man. Not 'who told you to die?' perhaps, but 'who told you to get sick?' we shall one day be able to say ; and without treatment or drug, without sinning against science or Christian science, we shall follow it with the words that are sufficient to conquer disease, *Get up, by the Grace of God.*

To put his disciples to the test, At-Tazi would sometimes indulge in nonsense. He would say, for instance : 'We wish someone would bring us some dates from the Caucasus, or some grapes from the sea.' Once when he did say this, one of his friends whispered to another, 'The Sheikh is getting old.' But Saiyed Ahmad, who was 'as obedient to him as his finger,' prepared for the journey and came to kiss his hand and say good-bye. 'Where art thou going?' asked the Sheikh. 'To bring you grapes from the sea,' replied Saiyed Ahmad. The Master then whispered into his ear : 'We are in earnest, O Ahmad. Who gives earnestly shall receive earnestly.'

With these words of At-Tazi, Saiyed Ahmad ibn Idris armed himself and came to Egypt, where he tarried but a few months ; he then proceeded to Mecca, which he made his home for thirty years. The Wahhabis during that time, a little more than a hundred years ago, occupied the Holy City, but Saiyed Ahmad was not molested. He continued, on the contrary, to teach his doctrine of the symbolism of the Koran and the intercession of the saints. Every Prophet, he believed, has access to the Divine Throne, and every saint (*wali*) has a prophet who hears his prayers ; to which the Wahhabi doctrine of direct invocation, without intercession of prophet or saint, is diametrically opposed. I advocate neither the one nor the other ; but following the Idrisi doctrine to its logical end, we come inevitably to the mummeries and idiocies of the *halaqah* (prayer circle). For every prophet has saints to invoke him, every saint has sheikhs, every sheikh has novices, and every novice has a

number of believers who can froth at the mouth in the *halaqah*, when they are called upon to do so. Indeed, those who pray to the local *walis* have gone so far as to invoke even the stones and the trees around their domed tombs. That is what the Wahhabis rightly call idolatry, and that is what they set out, a hundred and fifty years ago, to destroy. The reasons for their failure, religiously, have been discussed in the volume on Najd. Suffice it here to say that with the Wahhabi or the Sufi the aspiration to rise to God or to a union with the divine principle of the universe, can only be realized through individual devotion and discipline. A symbol loses its significance in a congregation, and in a *halaqah* Sufism is destroyed.

Saiyed Ahmad ibn Idris did not hesitate to seek the aid of every Sufi sheikh he met; so earnestly, indeed, did he go about accumulating benefits and exhausting mediums that he was told in the end—the word came direct from the Divine Presence—to turn exclusively to the Koran. 'No one on the face of the earth can further be of any use to thee.' To the Koran, therefore, Saiyed Ahmad devoted many years of exclusive study; and it was during these years, I think, that he said, 'My way is the needle-eye of happiness.' But more characteristic of the Sufi is his other saying, 'My way has neither space nor time; the first step is both here and in the Divine Presence.'

But he did not of a sudden attain this state. There are human and spiritual mediums, it seems, which help the Sufi to rise to the central point of union; and we have seen how Saiyed Ahmad, through At-Tazi and Ad-Dabbagh, rose to an altitude from which he could hear the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, Al-Khudhr Abu 'Abbas. Now, Al-Khudhr was the companion of the Prophet on earth, and he continues in his spiritual existence to be the medium between him and those on earth seeking divine illumination. Ad-Dabbagh, both in wakefulness and sleep, used to meet Al-Khudhr and get from him advice in regard to conduct and prayer. But Saiyed Ahmad

gradually rose even above Ad-Dabbagh, for he dispensed with all mediums, human and spiritual, and was privileged to receive communications from the Prophet direct. 'I have met the Prophet,' he says, 'in the image, and with him was Al-Khudhr, who was ordered to teach me the prayers and ceremonies of the Shaziliyah cult.' [1] But later the revelations were direct, without the medium even of Al-Khudhr. 'I have given thee, O Ahmad,' said the Prophet to him, 'the keys of heaven and earth, and these are the Special Supplication, the Prayer of Glory, and the Act of Forgiveness.' [2] About the latter he also said: 'I have kept it especially for thee, O Ahmad. To none before thee has it been revealed.'

Thus does Ibn Idris mix prophecy with Sufism, substituting for the central point of union an ultimate, Islamic means of revelation; and he thus comes short of the high state attained by noted Sufis, like Ibn 'ul-Arabi and Jalal-ud-Din Rumi, who discarded ultimately even the Koran. But the miracle is that for sixty years he lived in this book and with the author of it; or is it because he did so that he became the subject of prophetic manifestations and was subsequently endowed with miraculous power? I wonder what would be the state of a man who read nothing but Shakespeare, who lived exclusively in the plays, for sixty years. But the analogy is not quite apposite. The Koran has but one hero, Shakespeare has a hundred; the Koran may carry one in a straight course to a chosen goal, Al-Khudhr, for instance; Shakespeare will bring all goals within his reach and strike him dumb with embarrassment; but both, I think, will have a dire effect in a grind of sixty years. The Koran did not unhinge the mind of Ibn Idris,

[1] One of the noted cults of North Africa. That of the Idrisi, which spread in Tihamah, Asir, and parts of the Sudan, is called Ahmadiyah, after his own name, although its ritual is much like that of the Shaziliyah.

[2] These are chapters in the Book of Ahmad Ibn Idris. In the Prayer of Glory he beseeches God to join him with Muhammad as he joined the body and the soul. 'Make Muhammad my soul in this life and the next.' In the Act of Forgiveness, he repents of his sins, the known to him and the unknown, 'as many times as the mind can conceive and the pen can write.'

but it held him back, in a cosmic sense—it prevented him from soaring to the highest point of oneness and union—and it led him, moreover, into the commonplaces of Islamic revelation. On the other hand, the hero of the Koran was his model in life ; and for his noble qualities as a man, he was much esteemed by every one. Like St. Francis d'Assisi, he taught more by example, and his book might be called *The Imitations of Muhammad.*

Among his distinguished disciples, while in Mecca, was Saiyed Ahmad as-Senousi, who had come from Africa on a pilgrimage, and who subsequently founded the Senousi cult in Kafrah. But although it is based upon the teachings of Ibn Idris and has much in it of the Shaziliyah, it bears the name of neither the one nor the other ; the Senousi even withheld from it his own ; and as a tribute to his Master's ultimate source of truth, he gave it what he thought was its logical title. Thus, Saiyed Ahmad followed At-Tazi, At-Tazi followed Ad-Dabbagh, Ad-Dabbagh received his inspiration from Al-Khudhr, Al-Khudhr spoke for the Prophet Muhammad ; therefore, it is the Muhammadiyah cult, and it is still known as such in Kafrah and the surrounding desert. Saiyed Ahmad himself attached little or no importance to names ; even in his teachings, he valued more the spiritual factor than the uttered word. The relation between a sheikh and his disciples bears fruit only by a meeting of the hearts. Let the heart first speak, whether asking or answering questions ; let the heart first move, whether seeking or granting a favour. But little is needed after that. Thus speaks the true Sufi.

> 'I ask thee, O God, to help me to the realization of thy presence—a realization complete, which shall include my mortal sight—a realization that shall encompass every atom of my being, and efface from it the knowledge of everything but thee. . . . Enfold me, O my God, with thine own nurturing vision, and my whole being shall be a divine joy, flowing from myself, through myself, and for myself.'

There is nothing Islamic in this pantheism, which only a few of the followers of Saiyed Ahmad could understand ; and that is why, I think, he did not permit the Senousi his disciple to write, as he wanted, a commentary upon it. ' You will spoil it,' he said. But another of his disciples, Saiyed Abd'ur-Rahman ul-Ahdal of Zabid, who also saw Saiyed Ahmad in Mecca and spoke of him as ' health to the ill and balm to the wound,' wrote a book about him, which he entitled, *The Perfumed Soul of Al-Yaman*, and which did not help, it seems, to a better understanding of his cult, judging from its present state in Asir.

When Saiyed Abd'ur-Rahman returned from Mecca to Zabid, he extolled the great Sheikh he had met in the Holy City ; and one day, when he was relating to a circle of friends about him, they expressed a longing to see him— ' they imagined themselves before him.' ' This is the hour of fulfilment,' said Saiyed Abd'ur-Rahman. ' Lift up your hearts in supplication, and Allah will send him to us. . . . Write down this day and hour.' And it came to pass that on that very day Saiyed Ahmad ibn Idris started from Mecca on a journey through Tihamah ; and he came to Zabid, and he stopped at the house of Saiyed Abd'ur-Rahman ul-Ahdal. He was on a missionary tour, which extended as far south as Mokha and included Hudaidah, Bajel, Murawaghah and other cities. Everywhere he was received with enthusiasm and joy. Saiyeds entertained him, poets rhymed his praise, people flocked to hear him and declared themselves his followers. But when he arrived at Sabya, which is not far from Jaizan, he felt that he had reached the end of his journey, and he chose to make that place his home and the radiant centre of his spiritual message. At Sabya the Sufism of Ibn Idris was sealed and the Ahmadiyah cult was first established.

He was then seventy-two years of age ; and the last of his disciples, who sat at his feet in Sabya and drank at the fountain of divine knowledge, must have done more to corrupt the source than any one else. His name is Ibrahim

ar-Rashid, who founded what is now known as the Rashidiyah cult. Its *halaqah*, which I have witnessed in Aden, makes certain pretensions to art, but has nothing spiritual in it. Among the devotees are boys, who stand in rows facing the men ; they sing together amatory verses from the Sufic poets ; they sway towards each other, the boys looking swooningly at the stars, the men casting sheep's-eyes upon the boys ; while the Sheikh, sitting on a chair set upon a platform, looks on with supreme satisfaction. The performance, otherwise, is theatrical, and, unlike the *halaqah* at Hudaidah, without casualties. How different is the devotion of the Master !

> ' Help me, O God, to realize in my humanity the core of the universally divine. Make me, O God, the pupil of the eye of the divine universe.'
>
> ' Open my ear to thy voice in every condition of my existence.'
>
> ' Manifest thyself to me, O God, in that state of equality towards which converge all the lights of the universal truth, that I may do justice in myself to every rank and quality of the divine.'
>
> ' Reveal thyself to me, O my God, that I may know the ineffable bliss of revelation from myself to myself ; a bliss eternal, the weight of a hair of which, if cast upon the universe, would enflame it with love.'
>
> ' Make me, O God, the slave of thy devotion, thine own slave, with not a particle of domination in me over any of thy creatures.'

In these verses, taken at random from *The Book of Chants and Prayers*, Ibn Idris mixed his Islamic heritage with his Sufic achievements ; but what there is of the latter is deep enough to be beyond the reach of those who sway and swoon in the light of the moon. A Sufi may benefit people during his life ; and he may continue after his death to benefit a few individuals ; but he cannot be of any benefit to the multitudes who form prayer circles in his name.

On the contrary, as we have seen, he may be the progenitor, no matter how remote, of many abominations. He may even do a lot of real harm by teaching, as Ibn Idris does, a pious philosophy of Idleness.

There is in his little book a chapter whose title is as original as its contents are amazing. It is called *The Chemistry of Belief*, and it treats of the needlessness, the sacrilege, rather, of working for a living. The author even quotes the Koran and the Prophet to justify the static chemistry of his faith. 'Every Prophet has a profession,' says Muhammad, 'and my profession is poverty.' But even a poor prophet must eat, you will say, to sustain, at least, his piety. I said the same thing, before I came to this bit of alchemy from the Prophet Muhammad himself, 'If man rides the whirlwind,' he says, 'to fly from his bread, his bread will ride the lightning and overtake him.'

Moreover, to prove the words of the Prophet, our Saiyed Ahmad tells the following story. There was a man who came to pray in the mosque and he remained therein night and day. 'Do you not eat?' he was asked by the Imam. 'I do,' he replied. 'And where do you get your food?' 'From the king of the heavens.' 'Does he send it down to you in a basket?' 'Yes.' The Imam then took the pious one to his home, tied him with a rope, let him down into an empty well, and went to his business in the bazar. Now, it happened that the Imam's wife had prepared an unusually good dinner that day, and she was eating it with her maid-servant when some visitors knocked at the door. She therefore hastened to hide it by putting it in a basket and letting it down by a rope into the well. There, before the eyes of the pious one, it stood, and he praised Allah for it. Why, indeed, work, when Allah himself says in the Koran something to the effect that thy portion in life will come to thee wherever thou art, even if it is many thousand miles away.

Again: 'Thy livelihood follows thee like thy shadow.'

'The treasure of a believer is his God.' 'Allah hath promised his creatures their livelihood and Allah fulfils his promise. . . .' To work for it, therefore, is to interfere with the work of Allah.

Another remarkable chapter in this little book is entitled *The Act of the Sword*; and the story of how it came to be a part of the literature of mankind is curious. I have referred at the outset to Mujaideri, the man who first brought Saiyed Ahmad and At-Tazi together. Now, this Mujaideri was, it seems, a man of dual personality, or his soul partook of the attributes of both the Jinn and humankind. He was therefore able to travel, whether asleep or awake, in the different spirit-worlds; and one day he met among the leaders of the Jinn the great Kakaki, who was a companion of the Imam Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet. In the annals of Arabia there is a page or two about the expedition of Ali against the Jinn of Al-Yaman; and among the chiefs he conquered was Kakaki, who since then became his faithful companion, occupying a position similar to that of Al-Khudhr with the Prophet Muhammad. So, when he met Mujaideri he bestowed upon him a distinct favour by dictating to him the Act of the Sword, as he had it from the lips of the Imam Ali. Mujaideri wrote it down word for word, At-Tazi transcribed it, and Saiyed Ahmad ibn Idris included in his book the copy of At-Tazi. What we have then is a chapter communicated through the various mediums by the Imam Ali himself; and the most remarkable words in it are the anathemas. Ali had enemies, of course, and so had Ahamd ibn Idris, and so, perhaps, have you and I. We therefore, being pacifists, flee to Allah from them and ask him to separate between us, by mountains and seas, as he has separated between the East and the West.

But the Sufis and the men of righteousness in general, those who live in the Truth, and by it, and for it, all their lives, never swerving, never relaxing, and who, with a passion equally divine, would purge the world of the

enemies of Truth, have a right to ask Allah for more than mere separation.

> 'Strike them blind, O God, with the light of thy thunder; fill their bellies with the brimstone of thy wrath; give them to drink of the springs of boiling sulphur; make them dance in the mouths of flaming volcanoes, etc.'

In justice to Saiyed Ahmad, however, I must add that, being buffeted by the storms of knowledge, he was swept at times into the darknesses beyond the poles, and he cried from the depth of his soul against 'the seventy veils' that conceal the face of God;' and when he was swept back again, he stood in what he calls 'the Central Court of the Great One,' and enumerated, like Job and Shakespeare, all the ills, and all the woes, and all the corruptions that man is heir to. He did not even forget 'palsy and piles and the dreariness of the grave.' But in the profound silence, although he would be outside the 'Central Court,' beyond the veils, on this side of the universe, he could be heard offering thanks for all the bounties, the seen and the unseen, the known and the unknown, which God ever bestows upon man. He was indeed passionately sincere in every mood. As a poor blind mortal being, he cried against the impenetrability of the veils of God. But hear him as a Sufi:

> 'Were it not for Thy mercy, which is manifested in Thy veils of light, every particle of the universe would be destroyed by fire.'

> 'God is behind seventy veils of light and darkness; and the soul that hears aught of the rustle of those veils falls prostrate anon.'

A beautiful Sufic image. These veils, stirred by the breezes of the divine, whisper their secrets in the universe.

> 'By Thine innermost Self, whose secret hath wrecked the truths of Thy Prophets, whose beauty hath broken the hearts of Thine Angels, whose magnificence hath engulfed the love of Thy Saints, I ask Thee, O God, to withdraw me from

everything in the universe but Thee, and the love-fountains will then spring out of the soil of my nature everywhere . . . here and there . . . beyond, and beyond the beyond, where there is no beyond.'

This, in the garden of Sufism, is a rare and precious flower ; its petals are of the fiery lips of the Prophets, its perfume is of the prayers of the Saints, and its nectar is of the tears of the Angels.

CHAPTER IV

THE IDRISIS IN ASIR

'Make me, O God, the slave of thy devotion, thine own slave, with not a particle of domination in me over any of thy creatures.'—*Ahmad ibn Idris.*

THE man who died in the odour of sanctity, in 1837, at Sabya, sought no domination over his fellowmen; nor did he ever dream, I think, of an Idrisi kingdom in or outside Arabia. But from his tomb, which soon became a shrine, rose the spirit that carries both the Sword and the Book—the spirit that always found in Arabia, especially among the Bedu, a credulous and fanatical following. This is not to be wondered at, however, since religion in the Peninsula has ever been the foundation of the state—and, if the Arabs but knew, one of the principal causes of its downfall.

Asir, when Saiyed Ahmad ibn Idris died, was in a state of anarchy and chaos; neither the Turks nor the Egyptians had a strong hold upon it; and although the country along the coast, from Kunfudha down to Mokha, was supposed to be under the control of Ibrahim Pasha, son of Muhammad Ali of Egypt, who occupied it, in the name of the Sublime Porte, in 1826, the people, nevertheless, were against him. They fought against him, and, in spite of the eleven expeditions that were sent out of At-Taief and landed from the sea, they held their own.

The reason for the uprising both against the Egyptians and the Turks was that many of the people, following the example of their leader Abu Nuqtah, became Wahhabis

and were supporters, therefore, of the cause of Ibn Sa'oud, Sa'oud the Great, the conqueror at that time of Mecca and Medinah, in fact, of the whole Peninsula. On the other hand, Wahhabism in Asir was the cause of the spread of the Ahmadiyah cult. Pressure brings out the latent powers. And the cult that came out of the West, from North Africa, triumphed in the end over the cult that came out of the heart of Arabia. The fact is that the Wahhabism of the people of Asir was left-handed ; they followed Ibn Sa'oud for a time, because they hated the rule of the Sherifs, which was one day Egyptian, one day Turkish, another day Arabian, and always high-handed and tyrannical.

This state of things continued for twenty years, and then the Ottoman Government, in 1840,[1] decided to withdraw its troops from Tihamah and Asir. There were three rival candidates for the governorship at that time ; namely, Sherif Muhammad ibn 'Aun of Mecca, who was the ally of Ibrahim Pasha, Sherif Husein ibn Ali ibn Haidar, whose house ruled in Abu 'Arish, and the Zaidi Imam of San'a, whose authority, before the Egyptian occupation, extended over Tihamah. Ibrahim Pasha chose the strongest and shrewdest of the three, and that was Sherif Husein, to whom he delivered the reins of power, on condition that he pay a certain annuity to the Dowlah.

Sherif Husein was a crafty and slippery Arab, with an ambition to rule over all the Yaman and put the English out of Aden. For several years, with varying fortune, he waged war against the Imam of San'a ; but he extended his authority only along the coast as far down as Mokha. People groaned under his oppressive rule.

Whether or not he paid the annuity is not known. But in 1849 the Dowlah sought to re-conquer Al-Yaman, and Tufiq Pasha, who landed with an army at Hudaidah, assumed authority and forced Sherif Husein back to Abu 'Arish.

History indeed repeats itself. The Imam of San'a, who

[1] See Part IV, Chapter IV, p. 336.

up to a year ago waged war against the Idrisi to regain Hudaidah, was, in those days, trying to wrest the seaports from Sherif Husein ; and the British Government wavered then and wavers still between the ruler in the highlands and the ruler in the lowlands of south-western Arabia.

After Tufiq Pasha had set up a shadow of authority in certain parts of Tihamah, he marched up the mountains. His objective was San'a,[1] and the conquest of the Upper Yaman was his ultimate end. Tihamah was therefore left to shift for itself ; and under the broken rule of the Sherif of Abu 'Arish and the nominal rule of the Turks, it reverted to anarchy and chaos. Ibn Idris then came—it was his day—and established, in the shadow of the two crumbling powers, a spiritual rule, a real rule, whose missionaries increased day by day, north and south, and whose authority soon became supreme.

People came from Al-Yaman, from Tihamah, from Asir, on a pilgrimage to the shrine at Sabya ; and the son of the new *wali*, Saiyed Muhammad, assumed, reluctantly at first, the double rôle of prince and priest. The shrine became a throne, and through the channels of the new faith flowed the controlling influences of the new civil power. Openly and secretly, the Idrisis fought the Sherifs of Abu 'Arish and finally triumphed over them. They then aroused the tribes, who had joined the Ahmadiyah cult, against the Turks, and the struggle for supremacy continued for many years. Meanwhile, they were enjoying the fruits of their spiritual power, and this, together with the fortune they had amassed, gave them the whip-hand over their enemies. It also extended their influence to Egypt and the Sudan.

One of the children of Saiyed Muhammad, named Abd'ul-Mit'al, emigrated to Egypt, married there, and settled in Zainiyah, near Luxor. The marriage was very fruitful, and the issues were destined to share in the Eastern heritage of their house, as well as to re-establish its

[1] See Part IV, Chapter IV, p. 337.

connections in the West. One of the sons of Abd'ul-Mit'al travelled in North Africa, married into the Senousi house, and settled in Qairawan; another son established himself in the Sudan; while three others, Mustapha, Senousi and Al-'Arabi, went back to Asir.

But Saiyed Muhammad, in spite of his spiritual rank, indulged in the practice, common in Tihamah and Asir, of acquiring slave-girls; and one of these was a black from the Sudan, who gave birth to his son Ali, his successor in power and the first of negroid stock in the Idrisi line. Ali, a man of genuine piety, resented, it seems, the wiving eccentricity of his father, and thought that he could compensate for his behaviour, even correct the racial strain and purify the Idrisi line by marrying a girl, not of Semitic, but of Arian stock. Alas, nature seems even more eccentric than a holy Saiyed of Asir; for the Hindu wife of Ali gave birth to a child who was not from the point of view of colour an improvement. But he proved to be a political genius.

Saiyed Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ul-Idrisi, the greatest of his line, was born in 1876, at Sabya,[1] and educated at Al-Azhar University of Cairo. He then travelled in Kafrah, where he was the guest and student of Saiyed Senousi; and from Kafrah he came to Arju in the Sudan, where he married the daughter of the Sheikh of the Ahmadiyah cult. Thus the black strain was confirmed in the line. But Saiyed Muhammad ibn Ali did not worry about his colour or that of the mother of his children. Nor was he conscious, I think, of the Arian strain in his own blood. But he was too ambitious to remain in the Sudan, especially as the Idrisi rule, in the hands of his pious father, was losing much of its prestige and power.

He returned therefore to Asir, where he soon after succeeded to the Imamate and Ameership of the country. But the Turks were still in the south of Tihamah, governing

[1] He died in April, 1923.

what they could in the manner they could, and with the aid of monthly stipends to the sheikhs of the tribes, which they could not always pay. They were therefore getting the Dowlah in debt, and the young Idrisi, by taking care of her creditors, made her position more insecure. The Arab chiefs follow him who can pay. Other chiefs, the Idrisi observed, were fighting among themselves for power or lucre ; and by using the wedge of politics with determination and the lever of intrigue with dexterity, he helped the strong chief to destroy the weak chief, and then confirmed him in authority among his tribe. He also followed the example of the Imam of San'a in demanding hostages as a pledge of loyalty ; and with his gains thus always made secure, he extended his authority north and east in the mountains of Asir and Al-Yaman, raising his standard, for a time, in the shadow of the fortress of Abha and on the border line of Hashid and Bakil.

But the star of Saiyed Muhammad ibn Ali shone never so bright as in the two wars between Turkey and the European Powers, that is, the conflict of 1912 with Italy and the world war. In both instances he was an ally of the enemy of the Turks, fighting them first with Italian arms and later with both English guns and gold. They were his only enemies in Tihamah, besides the Zioud who came down from the mountains. But Saiyed Muhammad did not hesitate to use the weapons of his allies, when it was safe to let the common enemy rest, against his own particular foe, the Imam of San'a. It must be said, however, that in the war with Italy, the Imam made a treaty of peace with the Dowlah and was therefore an ally of the common enemy ; and in his war with ex-King Husein, then the Grand Sherif of Mecca, he was also fighting the Turks. Indeed, Saiyed Muhammad boasted of nothing so much as his consistency in his enmities and friendships. He was, it must be said, the only ruler in Arabia who persisted to the end in his hostility to the Dowlah.

He was, moreover, the first Arab ruler to join the Allies in the world war. Through the Residency at Aden, the British Government concluded with him a treaty in April 1915 which guaranteed him the protection of his coast towns from foreign attack and provided him with a subsidy in addition to what he needed of arms. Another treaty between him and Great Britain was made in January 1917, relating to Farasan Island, which he had wrested from the Turks.

There is no doubt that Saiyed Muhammad was a man of remarkable shrewdness and tact, an able politician, though not always in the worse sense of the word. He enlisted against his enemies the support of all the rivalries, the ancient feuds, and the political forces he could reach : the Zaraniq were his allies against the Turks ; the Shawafi' against the Zioud ; the tribes against the Sherifs ; and the English against everybody. His spiritual heritage, moreover, added to his power and gave a lustre to his personality.

Like most spiritual heads, however, he was accused of charlatanry ; but he did not use the phonograph to frighten the Bedu, nor the electric light to bewilder them. Even if he did, there was an extenuating circumstance. Not one of his contemporaries in all Arabia was furnished, by nature and circumstance, with more targets for his enemies. He was a foreigner in the country, they said, an interloper ; he was an infidel, an ally of the infidel Christians ; he was an impostor, a sanctimonious *tariqah* man ; and, more cutting than all, he was a negro, the son of a slave mother. He had to have, it is quite evident, all he could get of English guns and English gold. Especially the latter, for the revenues of Asir did not exceed a hundred thousand dollars.

But his army ? The Idrisi could muster thirty thousand in times of war. Every tribe sends its quota armed with rifles, and the Saiyed furnishes the ammunition and pays a wage of eight reals a month. It is the booty, however,

that attracts the beduin Arab; no army to be feared could be formed without the hope of it. The generosity of the ruler is another factor in his military strength, as well as in his political triumphs; and Saiyed Muhammad was very generous, not only to his soldiers, but also to his people. In Sabya and Jaizan there was always, in his times, a little army of loafers, so-called learned and holy men from Egypt especially and Morocco.

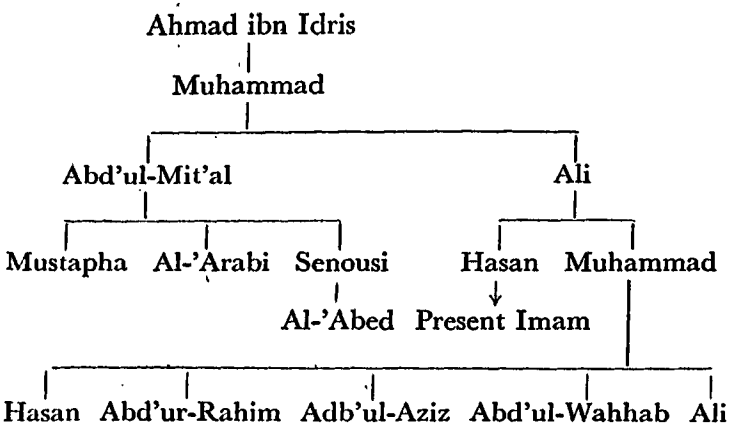
He was the grand Saiyed in a civil sense, even as his great-grandfather Ahmad was the grand Saiyed spiritually; and in the two, the Sufi and the political leader, are the sources of both the strength and the weakness of the Idrisi rule in Asir. I do not mean that the source of strength is in the one and the source of weakness in the other. There is a power in the religious foundation of such rules, which serves it in the beginning, but undermines it in its ultimate development. The shrine cannot go the whole way with the throne; the *tariqah*, even though it precedes, like our missionaries of the last century, the army of expansion, splits and deteriorates when it is removed from the centre of spiritual authority. Here, then, is the failure of the Sufi cult, and the failure of the ruler who depends too much upon it in his administration or in his conquests. Saiyed Muhammad did not do this, although he was the Imam. His own personality was the palladium of his state.

But this personality is not even foreshadowed in the son that succeeded him. The electors seemed to realize this, for they offered the Imamate and Ameership, after the death of Saiyed Muhammad, to his brother Hasan, who refused the great honour on the ground of ill-health. But Saiyed Hasan, now in his forties, is modelling his life after that of his Sufi ancestor, the founder of the Ahmadiyah cult.

Saiyed Ali, the present Idrisi, was born in 1905 in Dunghalah, of a Sudanese mother, and he was educated in Sabya. But his world has ever been a compound in which slave-girls play and the Koran, of all influences, pre-

dominates. He came into power in the spring of 1923, and in two years he alienated the best friends of his house, including the British Government; he ceded Hudaidah and other towns along the coast south of Midi to the Imam Yahya; and he lost the support of the strongest tribes in Tihamah and Asir. In the summer of 1926 he was, therefore, deposed, and his uncle Saiyed Hasan, who consented to succeed him, entered soon after into a treaty of friendship and protection with Ibn Sa'oud King of Najd and the Hijaz.

A GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE IDRISI HOUSE IN ASIR



CHAPTER V

ALONG THE TIHAMAH COAST

THE reply came from the Grand Saiyed at Jaizan welcoming us to his capital. But we had to wait also for a motor car, which became Orientalized in Arabia in that it worked but a day a week—it was then in the repair shop —and for gasoline to arrive from Aden. The day we received the letter of the Grand Saiyed, however, a steamer northward bound anchored in Hudaidah waters, and we thought it better to leave the motor car to enjoy its long rest. We prepared, therefore, to leave by sea. As far as I was concerned there was no preparation to make, for I had become a Yaman soldier in my travels. The story of my clothes is heartrending. In Cairo I left my evening dress (who but the English carry a frock-coat to the desert?) ; in Jeddah I discarded my winter suits ; in Aden I strewed my pongees ; and in Hudaidah, what I really needed could be carried in a bandanna. Indeed, my " royal state " was reduced to a Turkish towel containing my silk robe for official visits, my wash bowl and sponge, my comb and tooth-brush, and what even a dervish on a month's journey could not dispense with.

But my new companion—— The reader, I think, will ask, ' What happened to the first companion, to Constantine ? ' Let me answer before we embark. When our mail from Aden arrived, Constantine received a letter from Jeddah, which was a litany of woe. In his absence of three months the Minister-poet had not been able to put two rhymes together ; the officers at the citadel had not had a game

of poker ; the Aviation Department was going to the dogs ; the Italian nobleman, who owed him some money, had disappeared ; and Tootoo, his pet dog, was wasting away with love and longing for her master. This alone was sufficient to cause an immediate change in his plans.

He came up that morning with the letter in his hand and a tear in his eye. 'Forgive me, ya Ameen,' he said, 'I would like to accompany you in all your travels ; but Tootoo—read—read what the doctor says. Tootoo is sick —is in danger. And no one, as you know, is dearer to me than she is. . . . The steamer is leaving to-day, in two hours. . . . Forgive me, ya Ameen. I must hasten to see Tootoo.'

He called to his servant and began to pack. 'Will you not leave Madani with me?' I asked. The boy himself, who came running downstairs, replied. '*Wa-ummi*,' he cooed. 'I want to see my mother.' Thy mother, O Madani, and thy Tootoo, O Constantine, in the peace and mercy of Allah !

The *Burulos* carried away, alas ! my travelling companion, and our table lost one of its piquancies. Even Dr. Fadl'ud-Din said, 'We miss Yanni.' Indeed, his breeziness and unfeigned candour, although he babbled and rhymed interminably, won him friends wherever he went. But he must have felt the weight of my attachment. I weaned him for two months from two of his 'small vices,' woman and the bottle ; and I wish I could have taken him with me to Wahhabi land, where he would have had to make a third sacrifice. When the *Burulos* came down from Suez, on her way to Aden, he went aboard and came back carrying a large package. I thought he had brought us some ice. A little later I saw on the shelf a shocking stock of cigarettes. He had bought up the chief steward's stock. He smoked five boxes a day, and of the best, when they could be had—and of the worst, when there was nothing else. In San'a, every shopkeeper who had a tin or two left from war days praised Allah for the Nisrani's

visit. And what a downfall was Constantine's! He started the journey with the scented gold-tipped Egyptian, and he ended by mouthing at a coarse and mouldy thing from Virginia, the smell of which would have killed Tootoo. Poor dear poet-friend, may the scented gold-tipped Egyptian be ever thine!

Instead of tobacco, my new companion carried with him a prayer-rug, the only outward token of his piety. His baggage, otherwise, heavy and multitudinous, was not becoming a philosopher. Besides, he had a servant with him who was a Saiyed, and I who might have been mistaken for one, I mean a servant. Indeed, I was but a part of the splendour. I looked for my Sufi friend only to find the Political Officer of the British Government. And the Political Officer carried a prayer-rug!

At the door of the Palace a squad of the half-naked soldiery was waiting to escort us to the wharf; and there, the notables of Hudaidah had gathered to say good-bye to the honourable *wakil*, whose companion, alas, was but a tunic with tapering sleeves. I confess I did not relish the part, although I felt the strangeness of why the human, at that time, should have been stronger in me than the Sufi. I wondered too if I had communicated this feeling to the honourable *wakil*; for no sooner had we reached the wharf than he dismissed the soldiers and told the notables, in a rather brusque manner, that he desired none of them to accompany him to the steamer. Even at the last moment of official nonsense—nuisance—the Sufi, with a word or a gesture, will always assert his presence.

It was eleven in the evening when the six oars of our *sanbook* were turned into a languid, low-lying sea; the waves were shrouded with moonlight, and the humidity was heavy in an air that was still warm. It was even warmer than on the top-roof of the Palace, where the little lamp in a big glass case, the so-called harbour light, was still burning. In an hour we reached the *Africa*, which was enveloped in a profound stillness. All the lights,

except that of the topmast, were extinguished and everybody was asleep. The little 200-tonner lay there exhausted and silenced, as it were, by the heat. 'Ya-ho, ya Ubtan (Captain)!' our crew shouted in chorus, and two sailors, rubbing their eyes, leaned over the rail, questioning, hesitating. 'We are not pirates, ye dogs,' snapped up one of our men; 'lower the ladder for the *wakil*.' They did so immediately, and we boarded what was more like a collier than a passenger boat.

We walked through a furrow of human bodies, passengers and crew, stretched half-naked on deck, in a heavy stillness, apparently dead. Heat and sleep seemed to have balanced their fate. Up a ladder, and we were in what is called the first class section of the boat. Fadl'ud-Din examined the little square landing and found two or three lumps of flesh in a bunk, a few more on the floor, and finally came to the skipper's cabin, where we found no skipper. He was sleeping on the upper deck; and soon he came down with a greeting as cordial as a somnolent host could make it. He had an agreeable voice, and it was more so when he ordered us a whisky and soda. He was also desirous of conversation, had, it seemed, a speech-hunger, and we were not the less pleased; it revealed a culture quite rare on a Red Sea craft.

He then led us up to the top deck, where, like himself and his officers, we slept on cots under canvas. About an hour only, and then, the clatter of chains, and the clamour of men, and the slamming of doors, and the squeaking of ropes, and the ringing of a bell, and, above the din and noise, the voice of the skipper, which put the slave and the machine in motion. The ship started to move and soon the noise and the clamour subsided. Another hour of sleep, and the breeze of dawn swept over sallow faces and opened the heavy lids of sticky eyes.

The first thing I saw was the steering wheel, behind which was a boy in blue with a decoration on his breast. At the other end of the small deck was the skipper, bent

over a table on which was the chart. There is no danger, said I to myself, in sleeping between the chart and the compass. The boy in blue, with a red sash and decoration, is a descendant of that race of mariners who discovered India before the British, but with the help of the Jesuits lost eventually what they had conquered; and those who remained there, after the evacuation, married native girls, lost their original name, Portuguese, while preserving a semblance of their Catholic religion, and have since then been known as Goas, from the country their ancestors first occupied on the south-west coast. The sea still gives most of them their livelihood, for the English cannot find better seamen for their Eastern craft. I spoke of the decoration the boy wore on his breast; it was but a compass embroidered in red and yellow—embroidered with his own hand at off hours. Every Goa on the ship thus decorates himself; and a better-looking sailor, and cleaner, and lighter of step, I have not seen.

But the dawn, as I looked down the main deck, revealed a crowd of passengers who should find the darkness, were they not Orientals, more agreeable. They were as indifferent, however, as a crowd of pilgrims, as squalid too and picturesque. But they were not idle at that hour; every one was busy doing something—praying, kindling a fire, making coffee, washing, dressing, smoking a *mada'ah*, counting a rosary! A young man, seated amidst a shipment of dates, on top of the pile, with a looking-glass held between his feet, was folding, as fastidiously as a girl before a mirror, a huge Indian turban on his head; while a Somali woman in *décolleté*, not far from him, on the same pile, was adjusting her single strap over her shoulder. With this woman was an old man who seemed very attentive; but she would spit every time she looked at him. He did not mind. No one seemed to mind anything or anybody outside his or her own cosmos. The sailors too ran and leaped through them and over them as if they were bundles of merchandise. Near me, outside the rail,

MAKALLAH.
Capital of Lower Hadhramut.

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was the Goa with the sounding-lead, crying in English, 'Seven, eight, ten and a half.' We were still zigzagging near the coast, the dreary coast of Tihamah.

The *Africa*, which was made in England and manned with half-Christian sailors, belonged to a Parsi or a Company of Parsis in Aden. The skipper told us more about it. 'There is but one class on the *Africa*,' he said. 'Where you are now is class; the other is no-class. Like its engine, which has but one speed—full speed and stop.' Later, in a reminiscent mood, he said: 'I was the captain of a Transatlantic liner before the war, and here I am now on one of Kawasji's tubs, getting barely one-fifth of what I used to get from an English Company. What's to be done? Kawasji's few rupees are better than idleness in Liverpool. . . . But I like the Arabs, I respect them. Quiet, peaceful, patient, unobtruding—no better passengers, even as they are, have I ever seen.'

Nor has he ever dined, I am sure, with passengers like ourselves, who came to the table in the easy guise of dervishes. I tied the long sleeves of my tunic around my waist; the tassels of the string of Fadl'ud-Din's Indian trousers came down to his knee; while Captain Hay, God bless him! would come in his pyjamas, and barefoot. 'I have doffed my sandals in your honour, gentlemen. Welcome to the house of Kawasji. The ship is yours. . . . Ask for what you like, but don't go far in your taste. . . . We're on the Red Sea, remember, and this is not a P. and O.' With these words, he received us at his table, this cultured and genial Englishman, whose words were once obeyed on better ships than the *Africa*, and whose eyes have seen certainly more respectable passengers than ourselves. But Captain Hay is one of those few on the sea and on land who see but the good in men. And there was some good in my companion and myself, I must confess, which could not be overlooked. That an official of the British Government should travel with a dervish is in itself a testimony; that I, who was reputed to be anti-

English, should consent to be seen with a British official in Arabia is illuminating ; and that the skipper of the *Africa* should readily see the latent qualities of his guests is quite fortunate. We could all of us, therefore, dispense with outward show. Formality ? We tied a stone around her neck and threw her overboard. We were barbarians who ate with knife and fork—who could also read the compass and the chart.

There is between the Tihamah coast and the deep sea a chain of coral reefs through which the navigator of coasting vessels must make his way ; and the depth, as we zig-zagged in a honeycomb of sand islands near Kamaran, was never more than twenty-five fathoms and seldom less than fifteen. The little islands, some not bigger than a stage, looked like scabs on the sea, and even Kamaran seemed deserted. But the Quarantine at that time of the year, the pilgrim-season, was no doubt full. Thirty thousand *hajjis*, coming to Mecca from India, Java, Iraq and Persia and Afghanistan, were cleared the previous month. There is also a wireless station on the Island.

The Tihamah coast is monotonously, appallingly flat and dull. Moreover, for many miles inland it seems so low and shadow-like that the sea might roll over it and submerge it up to the foot of the mountains in a day. Not a hill, not a ridge, not a rock to stop it in its course. The ruggedness, the ridges and cliffs are already under water, and through them, without a chart, no vessel can safely be navigated. Who was it that first charted this Arabian sea ? Who was it that first strode the terror of the unknown, and penetrated into its mysteries, and discovered its dangers to the seamen of the world ? Who was it that first struck a path between the cliffs, through the rocky labyrinths under the waves ? Who was it that made the highway of this eastern sea thus safe by day and safer with its lighthouses by night ? It was, indeed, that son and master of the sea, the Englishman. To him the credit and the honour. To

him the thanks of every traveller and seaman that safely comes into a Red Sea port.

An Oriental steamship company may dispense with English officers, but it cannot dispense, no matter how adequate its resources, with the charts of the British Navy. Let me here ask a question. Of what does the greatness of a nation consist? Suppose that the British Empire is dismembered to-morrow, and that the British nation is reduced to what it was in the days of Hengist and Horsa. Its true riches, nevertheless, will remain; its sciences, its men, and its recorded experiences will remain. A nation that is rich with these need fear no ill of Time or Circumstance. Doubt not, my reader, what I say. Rome had science and a recorded experience; but Rome had already lost, ere its downfall, the stuff of which men are made. This is not true of England. For the true Englishman—and he is not yet in the minority—is like this sea captain who falls from his throne and remains a king: a king in his qualities of heart and mind, whatever his condition. And he does his daily work, whatever it be, without any complaint, or scorn, or makeshift; he does it honestly, thoroughly, whole-heartedly.

Another deck passenger on the *Africa*, who slept in the cabin, however, and did not eat at our table, was a man from Hadhramout. A noble specimen of manhood, he was, and of the Saiyeds of that country. He condescended to speak when I addressed him; and I learned by inference that he was an erudite of Saiwoon, the city of learning in Hadhramout, as well as an orator and poet. He had read most of the contemporary poets of Syria and Egypt, but he had not heard of Rihani till recently in Aden.

'I was told that the Ustaz (he meant me) is a spy for the British Government.'

'That may be.'

'Our rulers are, then, being deceived.'

'No one is infallible.'

'I heard also that he is in the service of King Husein.'

'That may be.'

'Are you going to Jaizan?'

'*Inshallah.*'

My own questions, outside of literature, he was not inclined to answer. But I learned from another passenger, an Aden merchant, that he was seen often at the Residency, that he was one of the leaders of the Kathiri Party in Hadhramout, and that he had come to ask the assistance of the English Government against the opposing Party, the Qo'aitis, and their Sultan. Another version was Captain Hay's: 'He told me that he was a merchant from Hadhramout and that he was going to Midi.' A third is Fadl'ud-Din's, who knows a Saiyed by his smell. 'He is a beggar-Saiyed,' said my companion, when we first saw him, 'and he is going to Jaizan. Many of his kind come to the Capital to praise the Imam and get a few pounds.' But when we anchored before Midi, he was among those to go ashore. 'You have wronged the man,' I said; 'he must be a merchant.' 'He is a beggar-Saiyed,' persisted Fadl'ud-Din, 'and he will come back.'

Another distinguished passenger went ashore, and that was the Somali lady, whose *décolleté* might have been of the latest fashion were it not for the one strap only, which she wore across her breast and left shoulder. A tall, lean and graceful figure, with a vestige of comeliness and an emphasis of snow-white teeth, she stepped across the deck followed by two blacks carrying her bundles, besides the old man who gazed adoringly upon her, and she was continually giving orders. But she had to go down the rope ladder, alas, like the men; and she did so as bravely and cheerfully as any of them.

Because of a curtain of coral reefs before Midi, we anchored opposite a sandy coast about two miles north of it, and those who went ashore in *sanbooks* had to walk or ride back to town. During the war Midi was the only

seaport south of Jeddah open to shipping, and it is to-day the biggest city between Hudaidah and Jaizan. But the Kawasji Co. has no agency in it; hence the incident which I shall relate.

Before doing so, however, I should introduce First Mate, who was also an Englishman with a brilliant past. He was a prisoner in San'a during the war, one of the eight whom the Turks found at the Salif salt-works [1] and took them for a vacation to the Yaman highlands. F. M., who still deplored the passing of those days and wished he did not have to tramp again over the seven seas, was an old man with a shuffling step, a deep, dragging voice, and the disposition of a lamb at pasture.

I shall now tell you what happened when we were anchored at Midi. About two in the morning that night, the coolies came on board to discharge the freight, and Captain Hay, because his Company had no agency at that port, had to contract for the work. The coolies were of African birth or origin, with an Arab at their head, and they were mercenary and recalcitrant. The tumult awoke me from sleep, and I heard the Captain saying, '*Imshi* !' and the coolies shrieking in a gibberish that had nothing to do with the decent tongues of the world.

'*Imshi* ! (get thee gone !) '—the only Arabic word the Captain knew. 'If you don't want to work at this wage, you can go plump to hell. *Imshi* ! You black blackguards, coming at this time o' the night to bargain for an hour's work, *Imshi* ! or I'll—— '

Then came, in deep sluggish accents, the advice from First Mate, who had just turned on his cot. 'Don't fire at them, Captain. They're treacherous bastards.'

'If you don't want to work for a rupee, then *imshi*. You black . . . you think you're going to hold me up. You should be glad that we come here to give you a little work every month. A beggar doesn't turn his nose at a half-loaf.

[1] As-Salif is between Hudaidah and Luhaiyah, and the salt-works were then operated by an English Company.

Get to work or *imshi*. . . . You won't? Then get out of here or I'll break your dirty skulls.'

'Don't do it, Captain,' First Mate droned, turning again on his cot. 'They're treacherous bastards, they are. Leave them alone, and come back to bed. They'll work all right, they will.'

The Arab superintendent then spoke: 'Urrite, Ubtan, urrite. He work, one rupee. He work, *ana'l-kafil* (I guarantee).'

The tumult subsided, and Captain Hay, on his way back to his cot, was heard saying: 'If a man *is* a fire-worshipper, have people the right to rob him?'

A little later, the winches and derricks were crying, 'Sleep no more.'

And in the early dawn, Fadl'ud-Din came over especially to tell me that the Saiyed had come back. 'He is a beggar-Saiyed, as I said, and he's going with us to Jaizan.'

'But did you hear the Captain giving it to the coolies last night?'

'I did, and I thanked him in the name of Kawasji. If the Saiyed were the captain of this boat, he wouldn't have moved out of his bed at that hour for the sake of any one in the world.'

CHAPTER VI

JAIZAN

We anchored before Jaizan in the afternoon at the hour of the ebbing tide ; and ahead of us, as we were being rowed to shore, was a stretch of black mud and another of shallow water through which the sailors, with corded beds, waded to meet us. We got out of the *sanbook* to these beds, on which we sat, and which were carried on the bare shoulders of the men, who waded to their knees in the bog. But we were safely brought to shore, where we were met by a young Idrisi, Saiyed Al-'Abed, and other officials, who welcomed us in the name of the Imam.[1] We then walked up with them to the citadel, which is outside the town and not far from it and the shore. This structure is both ancient and modern in style ; a section of it is pure Yaman architecture, tall and dominating, with deep walls, small windows and loopholes, while the other is new and is designed for a home. It is, in fact, used as the guesthouse, and is as rambling and hospitable to the eye, as well as to the sense of surprise, as any palace-fort. But its windows are large and numerous, and the sun and the dust were our constant companions.

I pictured to myself, from what I had heard of Jaizan, a house of straw with Abyssinian maids to serve us and black boys to fan us the day long. The Abyssinian maids were present only in their handiwork—the belaced covers of the diwans, the leaning cushions, the bed linen ; and as for the boys, they were standing in the courtyard and carrying

[1] The Idrisi is called both the Grand Saiyed and the Imam.

rifles and daggers instead of fans. Protection were better than comfort.

Gizzam ! Captain Hay thus pronounced it and joked about its cinemas and cafés. But 'Gizzam' was on this little globe of ours, somewhere around here, a definite, self-supporting, self-respecting town, when Hengist and Horsa were devastating the British Isles. It is, indeed, ancient, and it was originally pronounced Ja'zan, which name, like most Arab names, is not without meaning. Ja—he came ; zan—he built and decorated. 'He built a city and decorated it with God's creatures.' He must have been a God-fearing man at first and afterwards a conqueror; for there are no traces left, alas, of his constructive and artistic achievements. Wherever he be—he lived, it is said, before the Prophet Muhammad who built and decorated the soul of Arabia for Allah—whoever he be, his work remains in but the name, which the English sea captain would destroy, abolish for ever. Gizzam ! We take refuge in Allah from the 'bloomin' foreigner's blasphemy. But the natives are also guilty ; they pronounce it Jaizan.

It is an attractive little town of pointed straw huts, dotted with flat-roofed houses of masonry, and decorated with scattered groups of palms and a crescent of the blue of the sea. The houses, whose square at the top is smaller than that of the base, are like little Egyptian temples ; and the crescent of blue changes its colour with the tide and the sun. It is glaucous in the flow, umber in the ebb, and a beautiful saffron at sunset. In the square below, between us and the town, is a little straw cage for the guards ; and beyond it is the Grand Mosque, which is a small building with a humble minaret and a portico for the pious idlers—and the sun. Southwest of the guest-house and not far from it, upon a cliff, is another fort with a few cannons, proclaiming that phase of development which in Arabia is so much desired and so little needed.

Our house was the best in Jaizan, and the view from it was of a calm and simple beauty. Neither grand nor

picturesque, it suggested a life of philosophic enjoyments —a life of peace, security, contentment, and stoic endurance. But where and how, I first thought, do the six thousand inhabitants, get their daily bread. No evidence of trade in the town, and for miles around it not a patch of greenery. On the other hand, the first *sanbook* that approached the *Africa* when it anchored was semi-official, it seemed, and it carried a number of very heavy little bags —bags of silver and gold. I asked Captain Hay if one of the banks at Aden had a branch at Jaizan, and he laughed. 'I too have wondered,' he then said, 'where this town gets all its gold. We carry bags of it to Aden on every trip.' Yes, there is gold and silver in Jaizan, even though it has not apparently a single street for business. But the merchants may be as prosperous in straw huts ; and they have a surplus of cash which they deposit in Aden banks.

In the first two years of the war, Jaizan was the only city on the Tihamah coast open to trade : it was the distributing centre of the greater part of south-west Arabia. It is now one of the two capitals of the Idrisi, and herein is the principal source of its wealth. Indeed, it is the central point in the circle of bounties and of trade, towards which people gravitate. They come from distant Morocco, from Egypt, from Upper Asir, from the cities of southern Tihamah, bringing with them that alchemy of intercourse which seldom fails to be productive. There is also a great deal of legitimate trade. From Midi and from the mountains come the caravans, carrying grain to Jaizan ; and they return laden with the salt of its mines and the goods which the *sanbooks* and the Kawasji steamers bring to its shore. Being also a religious centre, it has a halo—I should say an aura—of gold, which is ever in motion. Invisibly it comes, this gold, and invisibly it goes. The hand of the Grand Saiyed, like a magician's, attracts it and scatters it in a mysterious manner.

Two hours after we arrived, a messenger came to say

that His Eminence would receive us forthwith, and that the 'mowtah' was waiting outside. The 'mowtah' was a diminutive motor car, which attracted the children, some of whom jumped on the running board, as it chucked through the city, past the straw huts, and up to its western height, around a huge wall, more prominent than any building within it, and there, before its gate, it came to a stop. There, the soldiers of the Imam were gathered to salaam; but no indigo blue, no Turkish officers, and no bugles were here as in the Upper Yaman. We passed between lines of riflemen to the gate, where we were admitted by a black giant into a vast court; more soldiers salaam, and two civilians walk ahead of us to another gate, which led into another court, where we were met by the Master of Ceremonies, who conducted us to the vestibule of the inner sanctum. There, the two Ministers of His Eminence were waiting for us, and there, before a large door, we doffed our shoes, and entered into the Holy Presence. I wondered when we first got out of the car where the palace was; only walls are visible, and within the walls are courts leading to one-storey houses, here and there, of stone and plaster.

The inner sanctum of Ibn Idris is but another few square yards of Allah's land, with the blue dome for a roof; but the walls are high, and on one side is a door leading to the harim, on the other, the door of his private mosque. In the centre of this open space is a platform, a foot high, spread with rugs and furnished on three sides with high diwans, covered with clean belaced linen and divided with leaning pillows. The Imam sat in the centre of this *majlis*, while a big black slave, standing behind him with a big fan of palm leaf in his hand, was fanning vigorously. Among those who were present were his cousin Saiyed Senousi, the chief *qadi*, and a few others.

The Imam stood up to receive us, kissing Fadl'ud-Din on the cheek and giving me his hand. He then pointed to the diwan opposite to his own and repeated the words of

welcome. I was more deeply impressed than when I was first received by the Imam Yahya; but this was not because of the ceremony and pomp; I was in the presence, for the first time, of a black pontiff and prince, a negro sovereign who ruled a million Arabs, among them many thousand descendants of the Prophet. This in itself produced in me a mixed feeling; but gradually, as he spoke, I was drawn to the man and my admiration was undivided.

Saiyed Muhammad ibn Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Idris, the mercy of Allah upon them all, was a man of huge proportions and a strangely composite physiognomy. The only negroid features, besides his colour, were his lips and perhaps his nose, which was not, however, emphatically flat. His broad forehead and his graceful hands might have been either Arian or Semitic, and the only unpleasantness—an incongruity, considering his stature and station—was his piping voice. He always wore smoked glasses; he sat cross-legged on the diwan; and he had a trick of emphasizing his words with an 'aha,' which was not an improvement upon his voice. But he spoke Arabic perfectly, with eloquence and animation, and without an accent. Which was a compensation.

I thanked him for the welcome and the hospitality we met with in his territory, and he said that it pleased him very much to hear this. 'You are travelling for the good of Arabia, and the Arabs should do all they can to make your travels safe and comfortable. We their rulers should set the example; it is our duty, and duty requires no thanks.'

I then said something about the Arab blood in the Christians of Syria. The Ghassans, who are descendants of Qahtan, ruled Syria for the Romans before the Arab conquest, and they were all Christians. 'Their blood still runs in our veins. I feel that I am a descendant of Ghassan.'

Taking off his glasses, the Imam said: 'A noble descent. Ghassan is one of the Flowers of Arabia. But we respect every true Arab, who knows his duty and performs

it, aha! whether he is of Qahtan or 'Adnan. We are foremost Arabs, O worthy one, and we would defend the smallest, as well as the largest, interest of our land against European politics and foreign ambition, aha!'

But he did not evidently desire to pursue a political conversation in a public *majlis*; so he moved, by changing the subject, to America, and he plied me with questions about it. He had some secular education, and a few fundamental geographical ideas. But when I was telling of the discovery of the New World by Columbus, he interrupted me to ask of what tribe Columbus was.

'Of one of the European tribes,' I replied.

'Black or white?'

'White.'

'But there are red tribes in America.'

'There was, and one of them once owned the city of New York.'

His Eminence changed his seating posture in surprise and asked me to tell him about it. The story, which I was fond of telling my Arab kings, of how New York was bought for 25 dollars worth of beads, delighted him.

He then asked, 'And is the king of America to-day an Indian?'

I said a word about the Republic and its President. Whereupon, His Eminence: 'And have the Americans a religion?'

'Something of religion,' I replied.

He smiled dubiously, as he fingered his toes, which were tinted with henna. The question that followed was not amusing, for he knew more about the religions of America, evidently, than he did about her 'king,' and he sought more information. 'Are the Catholics there more than the Protestants? And what is their number?'

'Not less than ten million,' I replied.

'Very many. And have they much influence in politics?'

'It is increasing day by day.'

'And might the President be of them?'

'There is no law against it; but he is elected by the majority.'

He asked me further to explain the voting and the electoral systems, and he listened attentively, but did not wholly approve.

'They spend too much money there on the election of the President. Would it not be better to give him half that sum and make him a king? They will save millions of dollars, aha!'

'George Washington, ya Mowlana,[1] was President twice. . . .' And this was the other story I was fond of telling in the public *majlis* of my Arab kings. His words, when refusing the third term, were always admired. But Saiyed Muhammad disapproved.

'Our case, we Arabs,' he said, 'is different from the case of the Americans. If our Ameer refuses the Ameership, there will be twenty rivals in the field and all of them ready to fight for it, aha! It is the duty of the Ameer, then—and this is our case—to keep his place like a soldier, in spite of all difficulties, aha, and perform his duty. Only thus can he overcome anarchy and prevent the shedding of blood.'

Suddenly again he changed the subject by asking a question on geography.

'Is America far from the equator?'

'About half of America is north of the equator, ya Mowlana, and the other half is south of it.'

'And can one reach Russia from America?'

'By sea from San Francisco to Japan, and thence through Siberia.'

'We know that. But there is a shorter route. There is, between the farthest end of America and the farthest end of Russia, a sea of ice. Do you know its name?'

'Behring Strait?'

[1] Imams and Grand Saiyeds are thus addressed. Mowlana = our Lord.

'Yes, yes. Strait Bereen. And what is the distance through it, between the two lands?'

I was in a strait myself about that. I was stumped. It never occurred to me that I might be asked, in the *majlis* of the Idrisi, questions on geography which I could not answer. Otherwise, I might have brushed up on the subject. I had to admit, therefore, that I did not know. 'But I guess . . .' And my guess was wide of the mark. No wonder. For the only time before I had heard of Behring Strait was at a night school in New York, many years ago. I remembered also, in this connection, that our teacher once said facetiously, 'A good swimmer can swim from America to Russia.'

But my memory was obliging only when we were outside of the *majlis*; and I was sorry, I was angry. It would have saved the situation, had memory, contrary to her wont, come to the rescue at the right moment. The story, I am sure, would have amused the Imam. But I shall tell it, I said to myself, at the next meeting, *inshallah*. I shall tell it . . . how? . . . voluntarily? The Imam himself seemed to forget all about the matter; or he did not rely upon my knowledge of geography; and the only time I recalled the story again was when we were discussing the treaty between him and King Husein. I recalled it, but I did not tell it. And I was again sorry. I was angry with my memory and myself. Why could not the discussion have been interrupted? Why could I not have said, 'Speaking of Khunfudha, ya Mowlana, I recall that once a similar difficulty arose between Russia and America about Behring Strait. . . .' His Eminence would then have said, 'Strait Bereen, aha! What is the distance, did you say, between the two lands?' But alas, alas! Saiyed Muhammad died without hearing the story about Behring Strait.

CHAPTER VII

CONCERNING THE HEAT AND THE DAILY LAMB

THE dry season of Tihamah is in the summer ; that of the Upper Yaman is in winter and spring. It cannot be said, however, that in San'a and the surrounding country there is a spring ; for outside of the gardens the land is parched, and only where there are *sakiahs* are there green fields. The fact is that throughout the highlands of south-western Arabia there are but two seasons, summer and winter ; but in Tihamah winter is a state of mind, an illusion or a fear.

When I spoke of its dry season, I had in mind the monsoon rain : it gets none of it. But this does not mean that the atmosphere is dry. Not at all.

I have had it out with the heat in many places and many zones. I know the malaria swamps of Progreso, the annihilating sun of Yucatan, the wave spells of humidity and fire of New York, the *khamsin* of Egypt, the flame pits of Tiberias, the simoom of the desert ; but, for a steady blast, heavy with moisture, stinging with a tongue of white flame, licking and sticking, unremittent and undiminished, Jaizan gets the palm. There are sea breezes, mostly at night ; but often you feel the cool breeze fanning one cheek and the hot wave lapping the other. This is the naked truth. Even the perspiration, which soaks the garment you have on, does not cool the skin ; it increases, on the contrary, the heat, as though the water were on fire, and the humidity becomes insufferable. It is like turning

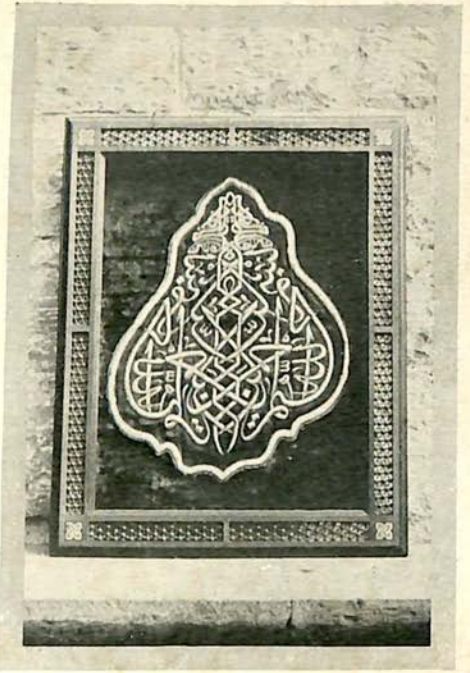
an electric fan in the vapour room of a Turkish bath ; the stickiness only changes its nature : it becomes, as it were, dynamic. Aye, a little breeze to fan the fire of your body to a flame.

The moisture of Tihamah has the three qualities, say, for example, of sulphur ; it has body and colour and smell. It is so thick that the sea breeze cannot thin it down ; it absorbs the grey and the gold of the vapour and the mist ; and it smells of the saline swamps of the surrounding country. It is indeed unique. Even as the sun of Tihamah, which seems to reverse its process of generation. Its heat, one would think, is being sent up from the earth ; it is difficult to gaze upon the ground ; and when you cast a horizontal glance upon the sea, longing for relief, you behold the sun like a thin veil shot with threads of silver at midday and with threads of gold in the afternoon. The beloved sun-queen ! [1] who comes to you in a veil of fire and remains with you the whole day. And you shed every garment for her sake, but not that, alas, which is woven by the sea—the garment of moisture, which only the sea can destroy. Oh, for its plangent waves ! But you are in Arabia, an honoured guest in the palace-fort of Ibn Idris —in Arabia, where decorum and respectability are often worse than painful swellings—and the beach below is only for the children.

Boys and girls, how often have I seen them (and wished I were like them) walking in their smocks into the water and then sitting in the sun or running on the beach to dry. Some of them would take off their single garment and begin to beat it on the waves to wash it clean. They also frolic in the water, like children everywhere, more than they do on land. A little girl slipped off her red smock, and while she was beating it on the waves, a boy tried to take it from her. She snatched it away, in a huff, swung it above her head, and came down with it upon his back, with an accompaniment of the filthiest language that

[1] Sun, in Arabic, is feminine.

A TANNERY IN ASIR.



A PIECE OF THE SACRED CARPET, OR THE COVERING OF THE KAABA—FRAMED.
Presented by ex-King Husein to the Author.

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overwhelmed even the reputation of both his father and mother. She even followed him out of the water, still beating him with her soaking garment. Men, too, often wash their clothes by beating them on the waves ; and they then put them on their backs to dry.

Alas ! and we had to be calling continuously for the fans—for the slaves of the fan.

' O thou Akbar, come hither quick.'

Akbar, the Saiyed-servant of Fadl'ud-Din, would come in with a number of fans and an announcement. The doctor was besieged with patients.

' Tell them the doctor is asleep. Let them come at night.'

Another servant then came in.

' The Sheikh of Shanqit comes to make his salaam to the Ustaz.'

' Pray upon the Prophet ! Bring me my *aba*, O Akbar.'

But Fadl'ud-Din often saved me the trouble of dressing for a visitor.

' Tell the Sheikh that the Ustaz only receives at night. Let him come after midnight.'

And what did we do in the day ? We were constantly shifting in our fortress, from one room to the other, from one court to the next—shifting away from the sun—seeking, not only the shade, but also the highway of the breeze. We had one room for the morning, one court for the afternoon, another for the early dawn ; and in moving our house from place to place were sufficient work for the day. This, indeed, is the principal feature of Tihamah life. Nothing is stable : everything is shifting, or is in a shiftable state. The pegs are never too deep, and the abode never too costly. Even the Imam's palace is a model of the philosopher's creed. Why, indeed, build at all, where the savage sun is ever on your trail ?

There were times when we did not have enough energy to move ; we dozed : we could not sleep. Why, even the fly had no energy to fly ; and you would have no energy to

shoo it. What happens? You lift your hand feebly towards your forehead, where it is comfortably dozing, like yourself, and if you chance to touch it, it falls on the tip of your nose; pursue it, and it moves down to your mouth. You blow and blow to no purpose; it seems to enjoy the breeze; and finally, as by a miracle, your temper is up and your energy comes in a rush to your hand, which is thrust at your own face—the bloody deed is done!

I was wrong when I said that our house was the best in Jaizan. The house of the guards, in the square below, is literally a cage made of reeds, set just so far apart as to admit as little as possible of the plagues of Tihamah: a little sun, a little moisture, and, being open on the four sides, always a little breeze. But better even than the cage of the guards was the other cage near it, which was set upon four poles in the air. This was where the chickens of the guards slept at night.

Next to a swim I desired nothing at Jaizan so much as a chicken. Not that I prefer fowl to fish or fish to lamb or lamb even to venison. But let me first inform you that in Arabia to offer chicken to your guest, unless he asks for it, is not quite proper. It is like offering Boston beans or corned beef and cabbage at a formal dinner in New York. Now, the Imam of Jaizan was not only more cordial in his reception than the Imam of San'a, but he was also more extravagant in his hospitality. The order given to the chief steward was that we should have an 'oozy' a day, that is, a lamb stuffed with rice and raisins and boiled eggs, and roasted whole, head and fat tail included. This *oozi* was served on a large copper tray, its feet tied together, and the head so set between them that it was the first to meet our eyes. It seemed to gaze at you sheepishly, to look at you appealingly. It was shameful, it was pathetic.

But I confess that on the first few days I felt neither the shame nor the pathos of the situation. On the contrary, I out-Arabed an Arab of Asir. I attacked first the head, splitting the jaws open and pulling out the tongue. I then

broke the skull on the nearest object of resistance and dug out the brain. After that I attacked a leg and a few ribs preliminary to the big drive at the centre, where, through layers of rice and raisins, I excavated, not for eggs—I don't like anything cooked twice—but for the kidneys. Having found them, I considered my task fully accomplished. Indeed, there is one thing more delicious than the tongue and the kidneys and the crackling skin of an *oozi*, and that is the savage attack upon it. For a few days, however, for a whole week, one may relish this bit of barbarism. But once, in the second week of the daily lamb, I saw, while dozing, a dozen *oozis* standing alive in a row before me, and I strained for room, for breath. Akbar ran to my rescue, and he told me that I was crying for help. I dreaded after that the hour of noon, when the servants came walking up the hill—the kitchen was in a house across the square—bringing the dinner, and among them was the cook himself carrying the *oozi* in a copper tray on his head.

But out there at high noon, where the thermometer registered 140 F., were some of the black soldiers of Ibn Idris, who would welcome an *oozi* any day and every day, and who did not seem to worry about the sun. They were at that time drilling or rehearsing or exercising; it was, in fact, a dance and song—some words droned off to the accompaniment of a measure, which was a hop and a leap. At the same time, they threw their rifles in the air and caught them with the other hand. The drill master was having some trouble hopping up and down the line, in short measured steps, to establish harmony among his men. What was the rehearsal for, and why at that hour of the day?

The Imam was coming to the Friday prayer in the Grand Mosque, and they were rehearsing, I thought, for a demonstration in his honour. I waited half an hour in the window to see the final performance. Came the Imam in his Ford, one of his Ministers sitting near the driver and a crowd of soldiers running in picturesque disorder before

him. They can run to beat a Ford, the Idrisi soldiers. But the blacks who were rehearsing, they shouldered their rifles as soon as they saw the procession, and began to run to join it. There was no performance, no revue ; they were just enjoying themselves—dancing to keep fit. Or was it to keep cool ? They certainly love to dance in the sun. Strange are the ways of the ' nigger ' the world over.

Whether blacks or pure Arabs, however, the soldiers of Ibn Idris are, as our 'Ubal escort said, as hard as stone. Barefooted and bareheaded, they go ; and what distinguishes them particularly is their amazing mop of jet black hair, which they comb in the middle, tame down at the top of the head, and allow to grow horizontally in the wildest fashion. The permanent wave is most common among them, and it seems to require no effort. Indeed, their coiffure is the most natural and most striking thing in the world. Hard as stone, they are. But, with such a coiffure and in their coloured skirts and white jackets, they look like girls ; and besides flowers and feathers and aromatic herbs, they decorate their hair with a tuft called *cadi*, which looks like an ear of corn and has a delicate smell. Akbar told me that when an Asiri gets married, he gives his bride a few *cadis* to put in her trunk to perfume her gowns. He did so himself and regretted it, because its smell, he said, made him sleepy. But Akbar was not a normal Arab : he disliked all kinds of perfumes. He wanted to be always wide-awake, and he believed that perfume interfered with his work.

Even as a servant, Saiyed Akbar was not a normal specimen. Fadl'ud-Din himself complained of his extraordinary energy. He is too quick for me,' said my travelling companion. 'When I want to dress, for instance, he brings out my shoes, my shirt, my necktie, all at once. Immediately after that, he brings my turban, when he should do so half an hour later. He is too quick for me.'

When we did dress to go out, which was mostly in the evening, Akbar, I must say, was unusually active attending

on both of us. But we only dressed when our mounts arrived. Like the actor on a hot summer night, who avails himself in the green-room of every moment of undress and the fan, and only puts on his sword and buckler when he hears his cue, so with us in the palace-fort at Jaizan. The Imam sends for us—the show begins; and Fadl'ud-Din's Saiyed-servant becomes annoyingly active. Here is your cloak, Sir, and your *ighal*. But have the horses arrived? Well, then, let us wait. Time enough to get into the misery of clothes. But soon the gatekeeper cries out, 'The horses have arrived.' And Akbar runs into the room repeating, 'The horses!' and carrying my *aba* in one hand and Fahl'ud-Din's turban in the other. Our cue! Quick! And off we go, trotting in the moonlight, to discuss treaties with His Eminence the Imam.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DAILY GOSSIP

'The blackness of the pupils of my eyes
Melt into ink, these words to thee to trace ;
So when thou art, Beloved, reading them,
My eyes will see the beauty of thy face.'

FADL'UD-DIN had written a letter to the dear one in the Punjab and was still repeating these, his favourite lines, when Akbar announced Hajji Muhammad, who was the only man we received in the daytime.

A dervish, a *faqih*, a phlebotomer and an eye-leech was Hajji Muhammad ; he dealt in hidden pearls and he practised all the arts ; he was the viceroy of Iblis in the capital of Ibn Idris. And he was our daily gossip. Like many of his fellow dervishes, he came from Morocco as a pilgrim to the shrine of the great native Prophet, and he continued to move in the shadow of his descendant for the sake of both his body and his soul. Hajji Muhammad was also a giant, who could bend a penny between his thumb and forefinger ; I shook hands with him once only and contented myself after that with salaaming from a distance. That terrible hand, with its club-like fingers, was nevertheless the hand of a magician. He could use it upon the most delicate member of the human body, the eye, and cure it—by the testimony of Dr. Fadl'ud-Din himself—of its ills. His only instrument of operation was an ordinary knife—and the help of Allah. Nor did he ever fail in the couching of a lens.

He came every morning, Hajji Muhammad ; and after folding himself on the carpet—sitting on his haunches and

leaning towards Fadl'ud-Din, who sat on the diwan—he would begin.

'The "mowtah" went to Sabya [1] a few days ago and came back by the grace of Allah complete. The judge it had the honour to carry is also in the possession of his health and his mind. He succeeded in settling the dispute between Saiyed . . . and one of his slave-girls, who had come to Mowlana with a complaint. This slave-girl was delivered of a female child that did not live a whole day. The Saiyed decided therefore to sell her, and she claims the benefit of the law. She has a good claim; for having given him a child, even though it did not live, she had become his legal wife. But Saiyed . . . says that she is a slave of ill-luck. "To give her master a female child, a dead child to boot, and invoke the law in her favour, is to devastate the garden of piety. She deserves to be hanged instead of sold." But the *qadi* has a fine wit, and the flower of compassion blooms in his heart. He therefore said to the Saiyed. "It behooves a descendant of the Prophet to be, not only just, but also merciful. Of a truth, it was the Prophet who said . . ." I forgot, O Doctor, what the Prophet did say. But the *qadi* was able to plant the sweet basil of mercy in the heart of the Saiyed . . .'

Dr. Fadl'ud-Din interrupted him with these words: 'The fire of hell is in his heart.'

'But he enfolded her in the mantle of compassion, O Doctor. He said to her, "I shall honour thee once more with my seed, and if thou bring me a male-child, a live male-child, thou shalt have thy heart's desire. Otherwise, the *jambiyah*. Kiss the hand of the *qadi*, and kiss also his knee. Now praise Allah that he came to save thee." And Jaizan praises Allah that he came back safely in the "mowtah" to his more important duties.'

Hajji Muhammad leaned back, mopped with his sleeve his brow, folded himself again three times—his haunches on his heels and his breast over his knees—and stretching

[1] Sabya is about twenty miles north-east of Jaizan.

his neck towards Fadl'ud-Din, he continued, in a whisper: 'The father-in-law of Mowlana is going to get married again. You know that he has three, and he now would buy a little black *firkhah* (chick). But the *firkhah* went to the Imam weeping, and he promised her assistance. Abu Frakh (Father of the Chicks) came also, and the Imam of justice said to him : " Only on condition that you marry her will I give my permission. I took thy daughter according to the decree of the Book in lawful marriage. Why should I permit thee to do what I have not permitted myself? " Abu Frakh consented, and to-night he takes her into his house. . . . I have not seen her. But it is said that she is the prettiest little black *firkhah* that ever came to Jaizan. Mowlana is magnanimous to let his old father-in-law have her.'

He leaned back again and mopped his brow, fetching a deep sigh. 'The Saiyed . . . has a boy-child from one of his slave-girls. Allah enfold us in his grace. Allah keep us in his protection. They are ruining their house, our rulers, destroying it with their own hands. A black *firkhah* was the beginning of the downfall of Benu Idris ; and they will slay themselves rather than slay their passions.'

The servant came in with the coffee, and Hajji Muhammad, after applying his sleeve again to his face, sipped his cup slowly and then continued.

'The emissaries of Ibn Sa'oud are returning to-morrow. Mowlana gave every one of them a largess in money and clothes ; but they still insist that the tomb of Mowlana Saiyed Ahmad at Sabya should be destroyed. Last night there was a debate at the *majlis* between them and the *ulama* of Shanqit.[1] I said a debate : I should say a dispute, a quarrel—almost a fight. The Shanqitis were of a certainty in danger. You remember the man in Abha who slew his son because he had violated the wife of his father ? Well, the man fled to Sabya and Mowlana had him im-

[1] Shanqit, in Morocco, is noted for its scholars.

prisoned. But the 'Amil of Ahba [1] wrote to the Imam saying: "Send the criminal back to us. You know not how to punish. You have courts, and you have delays, and you have compensations, and you have bribery. Your laws are of no worth. We have a law, and we have the sword. Send the criminal back to us." And last evening one of these Wahhabis said, "The sword alone shall purify Al-Islam of all heresies." The sword is their only argument. Whoever invokes the intercession of the dead, whoever prays at a shrine, is a heretic and should be slain. "But you too invoke the Prophet," said one of our learned Shanqitis, "you too are heretics." "We emulate the Prophet," replied the Wahhabi, "but we do not ask his intercession." "But emulation," rejoined our Shanqiti, "is imitation, and there is in imitation an implied invocation." "That is vagueness and evasion," said the Wahhabi. "And vagueness in heresy is worse than the plain truth of it," said another. Mowlana then intervened. "Kindle not its fire, ye people of Najd," he said. And he argued gently with them, quoting from the Koran that whosoever believes in God and the Last Day and does good, shall not perish.[2] "The Ingliz are infidels, but it is not our duty to bring them to the right path. They are our friends, your friends and my friends, and we deal with them honourably. We are true to them so long as they are true to us. You do the same in Najd. Deal honourably with them so long as they do not sit down upon your soil. And Allah will guide whosoever he please." That is what Mowlana said to the men of Najd.'

Hajji Muhammad sat back upon his haunches and paused for breath. After which, he delivered the following in an aside: 'A *sanbook* full of slave-girls is coming soon to Midi.'

[1] Abha, in Upper Asir, is under the rule of Ibn Sa'oud.

[2] 'Surely those who believe, and those who Judaize, and Christians, and Sabians, whoever believeth in God and the Last Day, and doth that which is right, they shall have their reward with their Lord; there shall come no fear on them, neither shall they be grieved.'—*Al-Koran*, chap. ii. p. 9 (Sale's Translation).

He then turned to me apologizing and said, 'The Saiyed from Hadhramout sends thee his salaam.'

I had forgotten the Saiyed, our fellow-traveller on the *Africa*, who turned out to be what Fahl'ud-Din described him.

'He read a poem,' said Hajji Muhammad, 'in praise of the Imam, who ordered that he be given a hundred pounds. And he is going back to Hudaidah in the "mowtah" with you.'

This last item of news set Fadl'ud-Din upon his feet, and he began to pace up and down the room. He then stood near the window to dissipate his ire, and suddenly he called to me. The sight in the court was amusing. There was Akbar—Saiyed Akbar—holding a reception. Some of the people of his village had come to Jaizan, hearing that he was there, to make their salaams. And they kissed reverentially his hand. 'This is a Saiyed,' said my friend, 'but he is an honest servant. He works; he makes his living. There is no harm if the people of his village kiss his hand. But there are beggars, and thieves, and adulterers, and assassins and slave-dealers among the Saiyeds, and people kiss their hands and their knees. Murawaghah [1] is the city of the Saiyeds; most of its inhabitants are descendants of the Prophet, and among them are those I have mentioned. A Saiyed goes out to the Souq with a basket, which he fills with provisions and vegetables without ever paying a piaster. No one dares to say, No. No one dares to refuse to supply them with their needs, especially in Ramadhan and the two months that precede and follow it. This is their begging season. In the Koran, Allah says to the Prophet: Warn thy nearest kinsmen—his descendants. But who shall warn them to-day? Who shall purify Al-Islam of their iniquities? . . . If a Saiyed marries a girl who is not of the house of the Prophet, and this girl gives birth to a son, she has to kiss his hand, his knee, and his foot every day. Why?

[1] Murawaghah is twenty miles east of Hudaidah.

Because he is a descendant of the Prophet and she is of the common people. She is held in contempt by her own son, who looks upon her as a slave. Take another example. A Saiyed has a slave-girl and a servant who is married to a free-born. The wife of the servant holds the favourite of the Saiyed in contempt and has no respect for her even when she becomes a mother and a legal wife. It often happens in such circumstances that the Saiyed sells his slave-girl to his servant and takes his wife in return. A rotten state of things, fit only for the fire of hell. . . . The Turks, even during the war, freed many slaves and gave them their certificates of freedom. But the Saiyeds, who are the principal slave-holders, now that the Turks are gone, will not recognize these certificates. They are chiefly responsible for the traffic.'

Slavery still exists in Tihamah, in Al-Hijaz, in Hadhramout, and secretly even in Aden. The slave-girls make excellent servants, and they are, as a rule, physically attractive. Hence the temptation to sacrifice a purity of blood to a purity of line. Hence, too, the abundance of mixed blood in these countries. Colour is of little or no consideration; and half-breeds, in the eye of Al-Islam, if their faith is pure, are as good as the descendants of Qoraish.

The slave-girl, the day she first conceives, becomes automatically free, according to the Islamic law, and attains the status of a legal wife. Up to that time she was but a slave in the house, obedient, obliging, docile, servile. But as soon as her master favours her and Allah prospers his seed, she changes clean. She becomes a legal wife, and she begins to order everybody about. Indeed, a freak of passion often becomes a domestic tyrant. If a slave-girl does not conceive, however, she remains a slave —a concubine—and may be re-sold.

As a rule, the Arabs treat their slaves very kindly, even as their equals. This is the case especially with male-slaves, who are brought up in the family with the children

and become so attached, so devoted to their masters that they look upon a transfer, by sale or otherwise, as the calamity of their lives. But the female-slave is an entity of potential trouble. She creates, as I have shown, domestic problems; deoxidizes, as it were, the atmosphere of her master's household; complicates the parallel complacencies of the masculine mind.

CHAPTER IX

ANCIENT TYPES AND CUSTOMS

I HAVE not travelled in the mountains of Asir; but the people of Asir I have seen in Tihamah, and I have wondered at the prevailing type, which is more Arian than Semitic. It is, in fact, much like the Yamani of the plateau region. Geographically, the mountain chain from At-Taief down to Lahaj is divided into Asir and Al-Yaman; but geologically it is one, and ethnologically its people are the same. They are all descendants, history tells us, of Qahtan.

On the other hand, the country was subject in the past, before and after the Islamic conquest, to many foreign invasions; the Persians occupied it for a period of time; the Abyssinians conquered a part of it; and the Carmathians, who were not all Arabs, held it in subjection for more than fifty years. Besides, from the Jauf in the north, after the death of the Prophet, and from Al-Hasa through Bishah and Najran, in the days of the Khawarij, many people emigrated to Asir. The original type was thus subject to the modifying influences of these different invasions; and the Asiri, as well as the Yamani, has in him strains of both the ancient Sabian (Arian) and the ancient Semitic. Even more of the former. His clean-cut features, his light skin, his straight nose, his delicately formed mouth, these proclaim one heritage; his oval face and his fiery black eyes proclaim the other; and when he is clean shaven, with whiskers under the chin, or a scrubby beard, he looks like an Englishman or a Yankee in Oriental dress.

But there are certain parts of the lower Yaman, in the maritime hills west and south, where the original type still prevails ; the swarthy complexion, the heavy mouth, the hooked nose, and the high cheek bones, which characterize the Semite, still mark the run of the population. Unlike the Arabs everywhere else, however, these people have large hands and feet ; and they tie their hair in a bunch at the top of the head, which is, according to the historian, 'a mode of immemorial antiquity depicted on Egyptian monuments.' The third type, the most common in Tihamah, especially along the littoral, is that of the *muwalladin*, or those of mixed African and Arab blood. But the type *par excellence* is that of the Upper Yaman and Asir, the Sabian-Semites, who are imposing in physique and highly developed in stamina and intelligence. They are the farmers of the plateau region. The second type, the aborigines so called, or the pastoral tribes back of Tihamah, are the farmers of the plain. The *muwalladin* are both the slaves and the traders of the country.

The Tihamah land is in the main saline and sterile ; but towards the foot-hills there are broad stretches of arable soil due to the detritus of the water currents from the heights. The crops in this belt are red and white millet, sesame and maize. In the maritime ridges, only a little cultivation is possible. But the highland zone, the plateau region, is very productive, because the rainfall is more abundant and regular. Moreover, the inhabitants are more virile and industrious. The staple products are coffee, bearded wheat, barley, indigo and lucerne. Everywhere, however, even as the Sabians of old, the Arab farmer is still guided by the stars. In Al-Yaman and Asir he watches the movement of the Pleiades (Ar. *thuraiyah* = riches) for spring activities ; when it is low in the west he knows that the spring rains are near. Aldebaran, when on the Western horizon at dusk, is the sign to begin ploughing.

But there is a source of wealth in Tihamah which must

be older than the Sabians and their science of the stars, and that is the mines of rock salt. Outside of Jaizan is one about twenty feet deep and forty feet wide, which is operated by the Government. The salt is blasted, broken up into small pieces, and packed into bags of 80 lbs., which are sold in the interior of Asir for one real and a half (.60 cts.) each. This mine produces from 30 to 50 bags a day, or about 500 camel-loads a month. Those in the region of As-Salif are manifolds more productive. For this reason, I think, the water immediately around Jaizan is undrinkable. The well from which the people drink is four miles out, and the water, which is not brackish, but has in it an excess of lime, is carried in jars on camels. When it arrived at the guest-house, it was the colour of whey, and it had both a taste and a smell.

'Shut your eyes,' Dr. Fadl'ud-Din would say, 'and drink in the name of Allah. There are more diseases in Tihamah than this water is responsible for.' And he would count them for my consolation. 'Scrofula, stone in the bladder, ginney worms (the snakes of fire of the Bible), smallpox, leprosy, malaria, and endemics such as typhoid, dysentery and diarrhoea, and all eye diseases.'

'What chances are we, indeed, taking!'

'We are serving Al-Islam and the British Empire,' my pious companion replied, 'and both the Prophet and St. George will take care of us. . . . Khedijah once said to the Prophet: "O Muhammad, Allah serveth thy heart's desire." And we both have Khedijahs, yours is in America and mine is in the Punjab.'

Alas, how often did I shut my eyes to better hear what Khedijah was saying! Nevertheless, the water had taste and smell, and the heart's desire, in that benighted land, was become a lump of synthetic salt and lime. But when I looked out of my window upon the city of Jaizan, baking in the Tihamah sun, with nothing around it but the barrenness of sea and land, I thought of the words of Niebuhr, the only European who visited it in the past. 'Jaizan is

situated on a hill in a fertile country.' I wish I had thine eyes, O Niebuhr! The town, since thou hast seen it, has moved to the beach; the hill has become a cairn, and fertility, alas! has fled. The kitchen gardens are even more distant from it than the 'sweet' water-springs, and in its market vegetables are as rare as pearls. Indeed, I could not but feel that Allah, in his mercy, serves the desire of its people—supplies them, too, with their daily bread and their patience from day to day. Otherwise, if Niebuhr were to return to-morrow, he would not find even the hill on which Jaizan stood.

Yes, in spite of their sun, and their saline marshes, and their diseases, they manage to live, and they are always praising Allah. But we in the West, with all our wealth and well-being, and all our scientific and medical resources, and all our luxuries and artistic treasures, we are the bondsmen of discontent, the victims of an unceasing restlessness, and the children—should the idea of a God ever flit across our consciousness—of vulgar blasphemy and revolt. Would we not feel better, I wonder, if we surrendered at intervals? Would not an hour, at least, a day, in the chains of resignation and thankfulness, give us a better grip of life?

Tihamah is my text, O my brethren of the West, and my sermon is a ripe cluster of words. The people of Tihamah, whom you now know—and may the knowledge serve you well—are, in spite of Tihamah herself, the most jovial and merry-making of the children of Arabia. That is the sermon. I shall now resume my story.

Dancing is one of their dominant passions. They call it 'playing;' and the women in the town 'play' separate from the men, while among the Bedu, the men and the women 'play' together. In Sabya and Abu-'Arish [1] especially, there are dancing parties almost every night, the occasion being a wedding or a circumcision. But the celebration of one event is finished only when another

[1] Abu-'Arish is about twenty miles south-east of Jaizan.

event takes place. Thus is the ball kept rolling. Indeed, the celebration of a circumcision, for instance, sometimes lasts ten, twenty, even thirty days, and there is an unbroken chain of dancing parties.

The women form in two lines, of from twenty to forty, opposite each other, and between them are three or four girls sitting on the ground playing the tom-tom and the tambourine. The dancers sway their torsos to and fro, waving their hands in graceful gesture above their heads; they then set them down at right angles, the hands lifted in front, palms out, and the arms, from elbow up, touching each other. This is a sign for another step forward to complete the measure. Thus they advance in line towards each other as far as the tom-tom girls permit, and then recede. The men dance in much the same manner, with a more strenuous gesture and a more vigorous motion. Among the Bedu the men stand in line opposite the women and as they approach each other they coquette, but they never step beyond the line marked by the girls of the tom-tom and the tambourine.

The wedding ceremony is the same as the one we witnessed in Hudaidah; but in connection with the celebration the Asiris have a very strange and peculiar custom. After the fiancé pays the bridal money (*mahr*) to the parents of the girl, and buys the dresses and the jewellery, and the presents she designates for her relatives and friends and pals, especially for her namesakes in the appointed list, and after 'the knot of marriage' is tied at the house of her parents, he lives there for several days, and then the couple move to their future home. Everything belonging to the bride is loaded on camels; the band—tom-tom, drum and tambourine—is called out; and the people walk before and behind the camels, which are chained, so they step slowly and mincingly to keep time with the music. The bride and the bridegroom walk in the centre of the procession, followed by the chair-bearer. But before the bride steps out of her father's house, she asks for the chair, and

she sits down to make a demand and a condition. 'I will not move out of here unless you give me (say) ten reals.' The husband pays, and the procession moves, walking slowly, very slowly.

But soon it stops, by order of the bride. She is tired. The chair-bearer hastens with the chair. She sits down and will not move again until the husband gives her fifteen reals, or makes her a present of something she names. The husband complies and the procession proceeds. Another ten minutes, and the 'hold-up' scene is repeated. She will not move further till she gets twenty reals from the hand of her beloved. If the house of the bridegroom is not far from that of the bride's parents the procession goes in the opposite direction, to make a long detour; and when finally it stops before the door of happiness, the bride sits on her high chair in front of said door, and swears by Allah and the Prophet and 'our mother Khedijah' that she will not enter until 'the possessor of the key,' which will open the door only with her consent, gives her in cash, say fifty reals, and makes presents of clothes and jewellery to her brothers and her sisters, to her father and mother, and to her friends and namesakes in the village. The bridegroom is, as a rule, prepared for these surprises; and when he fulfils all his obligations in money and merchandise, he enters after the bride into the house, and the marriage feasts begin.

When the guests leave the house that evening, they wait outside till a gun is fired by the bridegroom, after the consummation of the marriage—if the bride is a virgin. Whereupon, the guests outside fire their rifles, which is the crowning note in the jubilation. If the bride is not a virgin, no gun within nor, therefore, outside is fired. The guests return in sorrow to their homes, and the bride is sent back to her people early the following morning.

The Shahrazad who was speaking continued: 'The girl, too, has a right to reject her husband, if he is not circumcised according to the custom of our country.' This

is a barbarous performance, no doubt pre-Islamic, and is only practised in Arabia to-day by the people of Asir. The operation is performed in public, on a high platform ; the young man, with a sword in his hand stands upright, facing the audience, and begins, as he shakes his weapon, to recount the brave deeds of his ancestors, declaring his own name and that of his father and his grandfathers three or four generations back, while the knife of the circumciser is cutting into his skin. If the circumcised is engaged to be married, his fiancé may witness the operation, which Shahrazad described, as I had heard it described in Hudaidah, without the slightest blush. 'If he is not engaged to be married,' she continued 'and he likes some one dearly, a woman or a man, he has an extra bit of skin cut off from the abdomen, which he takes in his hand and throws in the air, saying, 'This is for the sake of So-and-so.' And if he cowers or shows any sign of pain, while he is on the platform, his fiancé may refuse to marry him.'

This adult circumcision consists of skinning the whole organ, and with the Bedu the skinning begins from under the navel down. It is a very ancient custom, which is still practised in Sabya, Abu-'Arish and other coast towns of Tihamah, as well as in the mountains of Asir. The Idrisi has tried to stop it ; but Dr. Fadl'ud-Din told me that, in his medical capacity, he has seen innumerable instances of it. In fact, a bridegroom may be rejected by his bride, as Shahrazad said, if he had not undergone this ordeal and proved himself a man of courage. In one of the towns where the law against it was being rigidly enforced, a young man was doubly punished for trying to conform both to the law and to the wish of his bride. He was a rejected husband. 'You have not been on the platform,' said his bride ; 'you are not worthy of possessing me.' To the platform, therefore, in a neighbouring town, he went ; but when he returned, properly circumcised, he was caught by the police and taken to jail. Thus was he

twice punished for wanting to get married in the conventional manner, according to the custom of his ancestors.

But the most barbarous people may also be poetic. In Asir the poet is both honoured and feared : he is honoured because he can enchant, and he is feared because he was once enchanted. There is a grove of tamarisks away up in the mountains, which is the abode of the Jinn ; and the man who wants to be a poet, who feels that he is predestined to become a poet, goes up to this grove, taking with him a present of honey and dates, as well as a sheep. These he places in the centre of the grove, and after slaying the sheep, he retires to a sequestered spot and waits. Soon he begins to doze ; but before he is fast asleep, he sees a hand lifting a cup to his lips. He drinks the cup and falls in a deep trance for three days ; after which he wakes up singing. He is now a poet : he has drunk of the cup of the Jinn (*saghahu'l-Jinn*).

And a barbarous people may be esthetic—may betray, at times, in voice or gesture or manner a surprising refinement of spirit. When we were returning from the *majlis* of the Imam one evening, we heard, as we passed by a row of huts, a voice chanting the Koran. There was a cool breeze, the moon was open-handed, and the voice drew us in the direction of the tents. One of these was a *masjid* (small mosque), and in front of it, on a mat, in the light of a smoking, smelling kerosene lamp, which was placed in a box to shelter it from the wind, were three boys deeply absorbed in the Koran. One of them was reading aloud, chanting the verses—it was the siren voice that attracted us to the tent. He was a boy of about fifteen, with but a yard of cotton around his waist and another yard rolled into a big turban. The other boy was his brother, 'from my father and mother,' and the third, his cousin. They got up when they saw us approaching, and the eldest, who welcomed us, apologized for not having another box to offer us as a seat.

Fadl'ud-Din knew from the accent that they were not

SOLDIERS OF ASIR IN FRONT OF A STRAW HUT.

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from Tihamah. 'We are from Zahran (Mt. Zahran, north of Asir, on the border of Al-Hijaz),' said the boy, 'and we came to the land of the Sid to study the Koran.... Yes, Zahran is very far.' Saying which, he waved his graceful arms, the palms of his hands almost touching, towards the north. 'We walked three days, sleeping in villages on the way, or with the Bedu. The Bedu are kinder than village people.' Asked why they came to Tihamah to study the Koran, he replied, 'Because in our country,' his hands again pointed gracefully to the north, 'the *faqih* likes *zalat* more than he likes the Prophet. Every time we read a section of the Book, we have to pay him a real, and when we finish the reading, we have to give him fifteen or twenty reals. So we came here, where we pay nothing. Mowlana sends us a *faqih*, and gives us each, moreover, a piaster a day for our food. Allah reward him well! Allah have mercy on his ancestors!'

'What Ameer do you recognize in Zahran?'

'We recognize no Ameer. Every town has its own sheikh, who rules it. But we are always fighting with each other.... We plant wheat and corn, and we eat therefrom, when we can reap them ourselves. We have to carry our *bunduqs* when we go to the harvest.... My brother was shot tending the flock.' He pointed to his brother's mouth, which bore evidence of a deep disfiguring wound.

I asked him if there were any Saiyeds in Zahran. 'No,' he replied; 'but we have *ashraf* (sherifs), and they are robbers and assassins. If they see any one with *zalat*, they rob him and then slay him.... I am from the tribe of Benu Hasan. Not Zu Hasan, no. The Zu Hasan are *ashraf*, and we the Benu Hasan are at war with them. I speak the truth—one should always speak the truth—the truth saves. If I come to you to-day and tell you one thing, and go to the Saiyed to-morrow and tell him the contrary, Allah will know it, and ill will be my lot.... No, Sir, we do not grow our hair long in Zahran; only a man in mourning may do so.... No, Sir, the Wahhabis did not

defeat us. They cannot get up to us. We are high ; very high,' waving his arms over his shoulder. 'No one can ride up to Zahran.'

He sat in a kneeling posture and his whole body was gracefully and eloquently expressive. The gesture of the arms, with the palms joined, as they shot out in emphasis or were waved across his shoulders, his torso following in harmony, is the most classic I have witnessed in Arabia. Such suppleness, such untrained grace, and such natural unaffected eloquence !

We gave these Koran students some *zalat* and promised them a lamp for their evening readings. Which brought from the spokesman a beautiful bouquet of thankfulness. 'Allah reward you well. Allah enfold your ancestors in his mercy. Allah protect you in your going and your coming.'

CHAPTER X

WE RETURN IN THE 'MOWTAH'

THE night before the day of departure, the sea was yellowish with phosphorescence; and close to the shore millions of lightning-bugs, as it were, emitted flashes of fire as the waves broke languidly upon the beach. It was an interesting phenomenon. In this month (June) of the year past (1921), the greater part of Massowa, on the opposite coast, was destroyed by an earthquake; and the people on the Arabian coast, from Jaizan down to Hudaidah, were almost suffocated on that day with waves, clouds of sulphuretted hydrogen. The fish fared worst. Millions of them were to be seen dead on the surface of the water. The people were in a panic. The breath of Johannam was upon the earth; it presaged the last day; the end of the world was near at hand. There is much in the Koran about earthquakes, but nothing about the sulphuretted hydrogen which is sometimes released by it. The people were not to blame, therefore, for imagining the worst. But it was for the best. The fumes, which came up with such force and spread so rapidly, were deodorizing. Tihamah went through the disinfecting room of the quarantine of Allah.

The night before the day of our departure from Jaizan, I started to say, the sea was yellowish with phosphorescence; and the morning sun of that day, rising in the plain, was as white as a winding sheet. The haze, its vapour-veil, was so thick that it hid or subdued every shade of colour. It looked like the moon behind a thin screen of greyish

clouds ; it looked like a wafer on a layer of ashes. It was the first sunrise of its kind I had ever seen, and I imagined the worst. It was not, at least, a cheerful sight.

About an hour later, the sea, which was as calm and placid as a lake, revealed a ribbed and granulated surface, full of iridescent shades ; but soon again the transformation was amazing ; for as the sun began to shed its vapour-veil, the water reflected a transparent blue, with purplish and greenish bars along the coast. Another hour, and the atmosphere vibrated with dull gold—it was yellow with the heat—and Jaizan was astir.

The guards in the Square were feeding the camels outside their cage ; a boy with a torso as perfect as an ancient Greek's, was leading a flock of sheep to the water ; a sheikh in long robes, very unusual here, with his hand on the hilt of his sword, was walking in a stately manner across the Square, followed by a Somali in white with his long stick carried upward like a drill sergeant's ; *sanbooks* were lying in the mud waiting for the tide ; children were playing in the water, sailing their toy canoes, waiting for their parents to return from a fishing cruise ; a few decrepit and half-naked people were going to the Mosque ; a pickaninny was riding on the little white donkey, which led out of town a caravan of a dozen camels ; a couple of youths, fashionably dressed in pungee robes and coloured jackets, with the shoulder cloth carried jauntily on one shoulder, and palm leaves made into a head-dress covering their heads, were idly sauntering down to the beach, where some one was already beating the drum for a *sanbook*-sail—a joy ride around the coast ; and another *sanbook*, sailing on the waves of music and song, was carrying a wedding party to Farasan Island. Together with that sunrise and that phosphorescent sea, these were my last impressions of Jaizan on the day of our departure.

The Saiyed from Hadhramout had gone ahead of us to Midi. But another Saiyed from the Upper Yaman, a man of about sixty, of the Sabian-Semite type, clean shaven with

a square white beard and delicate features, was waiting when we arrived. He salaamed graciously and took the seat near the driver, holding his rifle between his knees.

Midi is sixty miles from Jaizan, and the plain we motored through was like the land where Harb [1] holds sway, all of it a highway (*ardh Harb, kulluha darb*). We passed by a salt-pit and a guard-station near the village of Madhaiah, three miles beyond, where the labourers get their water. The salt spray in the furrows, made by the wheels, gave us the illusion of snow, and the only vegetation existing was the *shurah*, a tree about three feet in height, with white bark and a foliage like the laurel's. It formed a bank of green along the west side of the saline plain. The gazelles feed upon its foliage, and people gather the broken branches, which look like bones strewn on the wayside, for fuel.

The tide along the Tihamah coast makes its way through subterranean channels and fissures to a distance of three or four miles inland, where it forms salt pools and lakes ; but these, at low tide, although apparently dry, are dangerous morasses ; and to be misled into them is worse than getting stuck in the sand.

The Saiyed before us only spoke when he was asked a question. Turning towards us with a kindly eye and a soft voice, he said that he was from the Harith section of the Hashid tribe. 'We are in the centre, and the Hashid mountains are like this around us.' He formed his thumb and forefinger into a circle. Yes, he was a Zaidi ; but he had been for ten years 'in the service of this Imam (the Idrisi).' A man of real distinction, he was ; a gentleman up to the muzzle of his gun. His silence revealed half of the soul within, his words revealed the other half. And his Arabic was beautiful, articulate and cultured. It is wrong to generalize even about Saiyeds ; for like all classes of men, they are three ; namely, the noble by inheritance, the noble by nature, and the one without nobility at all.

[1] Harb is one of the biggest tribes of Al-Hijaz and Najd.

We reached Midi two hours after we left Jaizan ; and we remained in it a day to discover the secret and the circumstance of its importance. Neither its conical huts, however, nor its Souq, where blacks and *muwalladin* competed in the crowding with the filth and smell, could tell us much about the one or the other. But Midi in those days was more important as a centre of trade than Hudaidah ; and its prosperity was due principally to contraband. The caravan routes from it lead through the 'Aqabah up to the mountains of Al-Yaman and Asir, and north through the coastal plains to Jeddah. When the Imam of San'a wanted any guns or ammunition, he got them through Midi ; when the merchants of Jeddah wanted to smuggle their goods, they imported them through Midi ; and when a Saiyed wanted a good slave-girl, he came to Midi. In this gun-running, slave-dealing and smuggling town, one could also find pearls and sesame oil—the presses are operated by camels in the Souq—and women unveiled, who would not be caught by a camera in public. Nor is this strange, since Midi is famous for its secret violations ; and its huts, where the weapons of the fair may be smuggled into a traveller's heart, are, unlike the market and the Souq, exceptionally clean.

I went into a mud hut, which belonged to a prosperous merchant. The interior is plastered and whitewashed ; and in the walls all around, tier over tier, are small niches for storing provision ; while between them, up to the very apex of the ceiling, are baskets and jars, hanging from pegs, containing oil and butter and other household necessities. The hut looked like a country store.

In his private as well as official capacity, Dr. Fadl'-ud-Din was the enemy of the slave-trade in the Idrisi territory, and he had to be constantly on the watch against it. He had no authority to suppress it, however, and all he could do would be to capture the slaves, if possible, before they were landed, and set them free, or send them with a report to Aden. Now, Hajji Muhammad of Jaizan, it will be

remembered, whispered the information that a *sanbook* was soon expected to arrive at Midi; so Fadl'ud-Din was on the scent.

'How is the market?' he asked one of his 'friends,' a slave-dealer, who came to make his salaams.

'It is very dull,' the man replied.

'We want a girl-slave for the Ustaz.'

'We are the slaves of your desire, *ya hakim* (O Doctor), but there are none to-day. Not one, *billah.*'

'Not even at some of your friends'?'

'No, *billah.* The Souq is at a standstill. For the last two months, not a *sanbook* came to Midi.'

'We should be happy to serve the desire of the Ustaz. Perhaps you can find one, even if it is a Dunghaliyah (a black from Dunghala).'

'I shall do my best. I am the slave of your desire and the desire of the Ustaz.'

It was our purpose to buy a few slaves and free them. But the man never returned, and he who came later suspected the purpose of the *hakim* and made a flat denial. 'There are no slaves in Midi—no one now deals in slaves—by the Prophet!—and no one buys.'

'Here is one who will buy,' said Fadl'ud-Din. 'Look around and bring us one, even a Sudanese.'

'Depend upon Allah. Dearer than our eyes is the desire of the *hakim.*'

But he too never returned. The third man who came to make his salaam was a giant with a heavy beard, a raucous voice, and a bulging eye. He sat cross-legged on the diwan and spoke with a familiar accent.

'You shall soon have a great surprise, *ya hakim.* We desire nothing, *wallah*! but to serve you and Mowlana the Saiyed. We have cleaned the town, and every slave dealer is cursing us. It matters not, *wallah*! so you are satisfied. The first *sanbook* that comes to Midi, we shall capture, *wallah*, and inform you and Mowlana forthwith.'

I learned afterwards that this man was one of the biggest

slave-dealers in Tihamah. He has a big house—a palace—between Midi and Luhaiyah, where the captured slaves are kept and then sold secretly. He often thus eluded the authorities and deceived Fadl'ud-Din himself. Once in a year, however, he did make a capture, and the slaves were delivered to the Government of the Idrisi, who sold them at a nominal price. He himself often bought them back through his agents.

He was asked about the expected *sanbook*.

'In about a month. The owner went yesterday to Djibuti. We have our eye upon him. Rest assured.'

That very owner may be one of his agents; but his story was partly true, as we shall see when we come back to Hudaidah.

We left Midi at two after midnight in a meagre moon; but instead of the Zaidi Saiyed, alas! we had with us the Saiyed from Hadhramout. He was waiting near the motor car when we arrived, and he did look like a brigand. But he was a poet—we learned that on the *Africa*; and his mission at the capital was a success, according to Hajji Muhammad, who told us that he had received a hundred pounds in gold for his *qasidah*. He was therefore a successful poet, and that was sufficient to command the respect of men and Jinn. He was, moreover, the dean of the Saiyeds of his home town—this we learned at Midi—and herein is the very pole of the orb of greatness. He waited, when we arrived, to be given the salaam; and he then hastened to precede us into the car. But Fadl'ud-Din had already entered on the other side and I followed.

'You will be more comfortable near the driver,' he said to him.

Akbar had placed a suit case between us on the front seat, to be used as a leaning cushion.

The Saiyed: 'Remove that case and I will sit with you.'

Fadl'ud-Din: 'The Ustaz has a sore arm and he has to have something on which to lean. Sit near the driver, ya Saiyed.'

The Saiyed: 'The like of me do not sit near the driver.'

Fadl'ud-Din: 'Then you will remain here.' And he repeated the Fatihah (which is equivalent to a Christian crossing himself). The Saiyed, too, mumbled words from the Fatihah, and then placed his bundle inside the car and took his seat in front. I joined both these Muslem gentlemen when they said, as they repeated their prayer, 'And lead us into the right path.' I think I also crossed myself.

But five minutes after we had passed out of the town, the driver lost his way, and we continued for an hour after that to go in circles; for the motor car, which was a recent acquisition of the Idrisi, had not crossed too often this plain to leave upon it the traces of its wheels. At one time we found ourselves back near Midi, where a cameleer put us again on the right track. But before we reached Habl, where the slave-dealer with the bulging eye has his palace, we had lost our way three times, and had to invoke the heavens to keep us at least going in a southern direction. Fadl'ud-Din recognized Aldebaran and told the driver to keep it to his right; and every now and then the traces of the wheels confirmed the direction of that famous Arab star in the constellation Taurus.

At sunrise we reached Luhaiyah, which we found, like Hudaidah, still suffering from the effects of Italian and English shells. It was bombarded twice, once by the Italians in the Tripolitan war and once by the British in the name of the Allies. But it still bears evidence of its importance in its barracks, its fort, and its houses of stone. The Souq is as dirty as that of Midi, but the population is of a better class on the whole and cleaner. The people that came to see us at the guest-house were all dressed in white robes and they spoke an Arabic that betrayed a little culture and travel. One of them was from Ruwais (near Jeddah) and he had two sons there, who were present the night King Husein gave a dinner and dance in my honour. They wrote to their father in Luhaiyah of the

great occasion, and said : ' At dawn we were still dancing around the fire.'

Luhaiyah was held by the Turks till the last year of the world war, and it was subject to bombardment both by sea and land. About two thousand Idrisi soldiers under the command of a British officer had occupied Abu Halaq, which is five miles south of the town, while a handful of Turks were holding the wells, five miles east of it. The Idrisi expedition, of which Dr. Fadl'ud-Din was the medical officer, received water and provision as well as ammunition from the British ships, and Luhaiyah after a double attack by land and sea had to surrender. Very soon after that, it received the news of the Armistice, which was dated thus, 11—11—11—it was received on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918. The naval officers came on land to celebrate with the army officers the end of the war in a country where wars never end.

We continued that morning on our way, passing through the fishing villages of Tumniyah and Khowbah, which seemed to be an exhibition of the huts of Tihamah—mud, mat, straw, brushwood and reed huts, we passed them all. And out of them came the children to meet us, and race with us. One boy outran the others, kept up with us for another stretch, and then asked the driver to go slow. *Dalah, dalah* ! He wanted apparently to race with us to Hudaidah.

Dalah, dalah ! Allah heard the boy, and the car, not only slowed down, but stopped clean. The wheels were stuck in the sand, and we all got out, except the Saiyed, to work. The boy himself came to our help, and the car, with the honourable Load in it, was pushed out of the rut. ' Praise be to Allah, ya Saiyed,' said Fadl'ud-Din, as he resumed his seat. ' Allah be praised,' replied the Saiyed, without a blush or a word of apology.

The race that followed was more exciting. A flock of gazelles came leaping across the field to meet us—dashed

towards us ; and when they came within wind of the car, they all wheeled around like a regiment and took up the race in a straight line. How graceful, how light, how swift ! There is no doubt that they can beat the fleetest Arab steed in short runs. We were going at a speed of fifty miles an hour, and they kept in line with us for more than a minute. But more amazing was their last feat ; for instead of falling back, they surprised us with a spurt and crossed our path about forty yards ahead. They won the race.

'And there is the mirage,' said Fadl'ud-Din, pointing to a circular line of water inland to our left. I first thought it to be one of those peaceful underground penetrations of the tide. We were approaching the village of Ibn 'Abbas, which seemed to be an island veiled with mist ; and the reflection of the huts in the water was like the shadow of trees ; but there was neither water nor shadows. The colour of the mirage was more like that of the heavens, or rather the horizon line, a very light blue ; so were it not for the subjects on the horizon—the village of Ibn 'Abbas which stood there, suspended, as it were, in space—the colour of the illusory water would have been merged in the colour of the horizon, and the mirage might not have been distinguished. But I saw a like phenomenon in Mesopotamia in March, when the atmosphere was calm and clear, and it was the colour of the sea seen from the mountains on a summer day—a turquoise blue. The village of Ibn 'Abbas continued to look like an oasis in a lake, or a garden suspended in the heavens, till we came within a few hundred yards of it ; and then, its huts emerged out of the water and its tombs stood on solid ground ; the mirage which we were dashing into, at a forty-mile speed, as quickly evaporated, vanished away.

A little beyond Ibn 'Abbas, we were stuck again in the sand, and we all got out except the Saiyed, who did not budge. We asked him to be so good as to step out of the car to make our work, at least, a little lighter. He did so

reluctantly ; and as soon as his honourable feet were on the ground, the force of four men condemned to hard labour had a sudden effect ; the car, responding to the combined effort of the driver and ours, moved quickly forward. The Saiyed thought it was never going to stop, and he ran after it much alarmed.

The next town we came to after Ibn 'Abbas, is As-Salif, which is famous for its salt. It is a pretty village on the edge of a crescent of land extending into the sea ; and this crescent is a continuation of the Zaidiyah hills, which run about five miles in an easterly direction, up to the town of that name. Over the plain, where the tide reaches, was a film of salt which looked like the first fall of snow.

From the Zaidiyah hills south, the nature of the land changes. There is more sand, less saline marshes, and here and there an evidence of fresh water ; the country is covered with stubble and green bushes that resemble in foliage the pine. Around 'Urush there are groves of tamarisks and dom-palms ; and on the way, between Dair'ul-Bahri and 'Ijlani, we passed by several cotton plantations.

But motoring became more difficult, and worse than the trying experience of tugging at the wheels and pushing in the broiling sun to get out of a deep furrow of sand, was the Saiyed himself who would never alight unless he was formally requested. It was now about noon, and the Tihamah sun was unbearable even to the children of Tihamah. I could not stand more than a few minutes in the sand, and then I would run to the little shade close to the running-board.

Fadl'ud-Din, his hands at the car and his feet like its wheels deep in the sand : ' O thou Saiyed, thou child of the Prophet, thou art a strong man ; come and help, or we shall remain here.'

The Saiyed, after searching for his sandals and putting them on, slowly steps down and slowly for once comes to our help. But he barely touches the car, while he repeats

the Fatihah : he would set it going by touch and prayer. It was most exasperating, and Fadl'ud-Din's eyes were red with anger.

'Thou art like a mirage,' he said ; 'nay, the mirage is better, for it pleases the eye.

It was the worst moment of the day. The driver fell in a stupor ; I almost fainted from heat and exhaustion ; and Fadl'ud-Din and Akbar alone were still tugging at the wheels. But it was a hopeless job, and Akbar was sent to Turbah, the nearest village, to ask the assistance of some of its men. In an hour he returned, and with him were four black giants and a pigmy Arab their chief, who was most amusing.

'Peace upon you and upon the daughter of the Jinn,' he said. 'Do you wish to shake her out of her fit or to break her. If you repent to Allah, we will pull her to pieces, and you will be our guest for the day, and in the morning you will ride, like true believers, on camels.'

Bless them, they got us out of the rut ; and the little chief, who took the bakshish, divided it with his men, and said : 'Repent to Allah and praise him all the time. Do not stop praising him while you are in the bosom of the daughter of the Jinn.'

We took his advice, but alas ! it did not serve us the whole way. The driver, who was still suffering from the attack he had, got into the sand for the tenth time, and—get thee down, O Saiyed.

But the honourable gentleman from Hadhramout was not going to be obliging any further. 'I will not get out of the car any more,' he said with dignity and decision.

'Thou wilt then remain here,' snapped out Fadl'ud-Din.

I too lost my temper. 'There is neither spiritual nor physical good in thee—thou art a Saiyed.'

He did not say a word ; but he continued to ask the driver, 'How far away yet is Hudaidah ?'

Soon its minarets were visible in the glare of the sun, and

he must have been at that time the happiest one among us. We suffered physically; but he suffered socially, which was worse. Nevertheless, when he said farewell at the door of the Palace, he apologized for his conduct.

Two days later, Akbar came in, saying, 'I saw the Saiyed in the Souq. He walked alone and all the merchants of Hadhramout walked at a little distance behind him. He walked and swayed his shoulders, like this, as if he were the governor of the city.'

I further learned that his rank in his country as chief Saiyed was equal to that of a bishop of the Christian Church; and the whole scene, when I looked back upon it, was imprecating. What, indeed, could have been more shameful than to make a bishop, your travelling companion, sit near the chauffeur; and to ask this bishop to come down and help you push the car out of the sand; and moreover, to call this bishop a mirage. I was truly sorry, and I wished that the gentleman were once more my travelling companion to atone for an offence, in which he, however, Allah forgive him! was an active partner.

The distance from	Jaizan to Midi	-	60 miles
,, ,,	Midi to Luhaiyah	-	60 ,,
,, ,,	Luhaiyah to As-Salif		40 ,,
,, ,,	As-Salif to Hudaidah		50 ,,

CHAPTER XI

THE SLAVE-TRADE

He who educates his slave-girl, and frees her, and marries her, shall be doubly rewarded.—THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD in *The Hadith.*

BEFORE I came to Arabia I did not believe that slavery still existed in the world; and if it did exist in certain parts of the Peninsula, I thought that the rulers would use every means in their power to suppress it. But what I have discovered is appalling. Both in Al-Hijaz and in Asir, the authorities, who pretended to be against it, were often partners in the traffic. Besides, the Arabs were not alone involved, as I shall show.

Credit is due to the British Government at Aden for patrolling the Red Sea and making a capture, every now and then, of a *sanbook* of slaves; but it does not pursue its object to the end. After a seizure is made, the slaves are emancipated and the pilot and his crew are allowed to go scot-free. Or they may be sent to Jibuti to be tried there by the French authorities. This brings me to the proof of the statement I have made, that the Arabs are not alone involved in this shameful business; and their confederates are not all Orientals and Muslems like themselves.

East of Jibuti, on the African coast, is the port of Tajura, which is independent of the Abyssinian Government and is not wholly under French colonial control. Tajura is in fact an autonomous territory enjoying French protection; a protectorate similar to that of Lahaj around Aden; and its ruler is a Dunghali black. He is more than that: he is a Sultan; he is an artisan; he is a slave-dealer, and

he is the friend of the French. A man of infinite resources and infinite cupidity is this ruler of Tajura. If he loses his job as a Sultan, he still can maintain his royal state as a cobbler. He is the best sandal-maker, the only one, in fact, in his kingdom. And if the people of Tajura chose to go without a Sultan and without sandals, he cares not a straw; for he knows that the Abyssinian race is good for another fifty years, at least his lifetime, and it will continue meanwhile to produce good slave-girls. Now, the cream of these—I should say the chocolate—must necessarily come down through his own territory to realize their dream of 'a prince and a palace in Lubberland.' If they do not come down, he sends his men after them, and they capture them, kidnap them, or lure them away by a pound of butter for their hair. The slave-dealers that come from the Arabian coast to Tajura cannot accomplish anything without the help of the Dunghali Sultan, who is under the protection of the French flag!

This protection costs him little or nothing in the coin of his realm. On the contrary, in addition to the immunities he enjoys, he makes his friendship materialize. When he goes to Jibuti he is received with a salute of seven guns, or nine or twelve, I am not certain. But the citadel does waste powder in his honour, and the French Governor entertains him as his guest. Once he was put up in a house furnished elegantly and completely with French furniture. He was delighted, he was dazzled; but his cupidity was stronger than all his other passions. Before leaving, therefore, he called in the merchants of the city and sold them everything, from the gilded chairs in the salon to the kitchen utensils. He did this, I was told, in good faith, for he thought that the Governor had made him a present of the house and its furniture. But he did not sell the house; he could not. Even in Jibuti there is respect for the deed, and it must be also registered.

Tajura then, a French Protectorate, is the only African slave-port on the Red Sea; and the neighbours of the

European rulers of Jibuti, who have their eyes wide open, are the European rulers of Eritrea. Do we wonder why European civilization is fallen so low in the East? One of the chief officials at the Residency in Aden told me that they had no right, from a legal point of view, to punish the slave-dealers, because they are generally from a country which is not under British control. 'And from a moral point of view,' I asked, 'and a religious point of view, and a point of view that is purely humanitarian?' Indeed, what right has European civilization to exist in the East, what right have the Europeans to be there in its name, if its greatest heritage is lost, if its moral and spiritual ideals are dead? No legal right? And what legal right, pray, have you in Aden itself? If you are there, as a great Englishman said of British occupation of India, by your moral superiority, would you shirk the moral responsibility which is inseparable from it? What if the Governor of Aden made an example of a slave-dealer, be he from Al-Yaman or Al-Hijaz, or from Jibuti or Eritrea, and had him hanged in that little square, in front of Queen Victoria's statue? And what if all the ruling Sultans of Arabia protested? Would the Muslem world, whose Prophet enjoins the freeing of slaves, echo their protest? Would the French authorities in Jibuti or the Italian in Eritrea make a political case of it and use it to their own political advantage? All the worse for them. I am in favour of a radical measure. Patrolling the Red Sea is not enough. Rescuing slaves and freeing them is not enough. But hang me a slave-dealer in Victoria Square in Aden, and see what will become of the slave-traffic in Tihamah, in Al-Hijaz, in all Arabia.

I have shown the reader how the slave-dealers hoodwink the authorities, whether they are native or British. Even though they are 'in the watch-tower,' as a Saiyed of the Idrisi Government put it, 'watching for slave-*sanbooks*,' nothing praiseworthy ever happens. They are either asleep in the tower, or they watch only when the coast is

clear or the horizon is a void. Now, let me tell you what happened in Hudaidah. I transcribe from my Diary.

July 2, 1922 = 3*rd Zu'l-Qo'dah*, 1340.

The Superintendent of the Port came into the office of the Political Officer and said : ' A *sanbook* of slaves has come into the harbour, and the pilot and his crew are in the city. I learn also that they are going to Midi and that they have called at Hudaidah to buy provisions.'

Political Officer : ' Tell the chief of police to come here quickly.'

Ten minutes after, the chief of police appears.

P.O. : ' Have you knowledge of the *sanbook* of slaves in the harbour ? '

C.P. : ' I have.'

P.O. : ' Why did you permit the pilot and his crew to enter the city ? '

C.P. : ' They have a permit, Sir, from the Government.'

The Political Officer, Dr. Fadl'ud-Din, ordered the chief of police to bring the pilot and his crew before him. Which was done in less than an hour. But with them came a big bluff Arab, fully armed, wearing a straw sombrero and carrying a stick. His rifle was carried by a soldier following him. This man blew into the office like a simoom, and walking up to Fadl'ud-Din, he greeted him fondly, profusely, and kissed him twice on the forehead. I wondered. He looked like a slave-dealer : a slave-dealer should look like him. But nominally he was not. Nominally, he was the Chief Sea-Patrol of the Idrisi Government, and he had come to capture this *sanbook* and take it to Midi.

The *nakhouzah* (pilot) was then questioned. He had come from Tajura ; he had twenty-four slaves, fourteen of whom were girls, from eight to thirteen years of age ; the owner of ' the goods ' (*Sahib'ul-mal*) had gone ahead to Midi; and they were but a hired crew carrying out orders. As for the permit of the Government, there is the Patrol in person.

Here ended the authority of the Political Officer ; but as a medical officer he had a right to examine the slaves. The pilot was therefore ordered to bring them before him, and

he promised to do so in the afternoon. About sunset he came back, accompanied by two of his crew, and he squatted near Dr. Fadl'ud-Din, his two men standing on either side of him like ebony statues. 'The wind, very strong,' he said (there was a gale that afternoon), 'the girls very little and very weak.' One of his hands shot up to illustrate the first statement, the other was held out gently in a bud form to illustrate the second. 'To-morrow morning, I bring them. Good? To-morrow morning, *inshallah.*'

There was no telegraph or wireless in Hudaidah; and the only way of communicating with Aden was through Kamaran, which is six hours' sail in a favourable wind. Otherwise, a patrol-ship might have had something to do on the following day—the slaves might have been captured and freed.

Dr. Fadl'ud-Din wrote a letter, therefore, to the Representative of the Idrisi Government in Hudaidah, protesting in the name of humanity, in the name of the British Government, and in the name of Al-Islam, which does not sanction slavery, and asking that the *sanbook* be seized, the pilot and the crew and the slave-dealers accompanying them be punished, and the slaves be freed. The reply stated in equivocal terms that the Representative was of the opinion of the Honourable Wakil, and that the matter will be discussed at length when they meet. But here is the true reply, taken from my Diary:

July 3rd=4th Zu'l-Qo'dah.

The Port Officer came this morning bringing bad news. Later the Chief of Police corroborated the Port Officer, and shed more light on the matter. The slaves were landed at night outside the city; one slave girl was sold to an official of the Idrisi Government; the rest were taken to Midi by land.

Barefoot, from Hudaidah to Midi a distance of about two hundred miles! and in the Tihamah sun, which is hot enough to burn the brain of a lizard. Captives of the cupidity of people who bow to the authority of the Koran,

which offers rewards for the freeing of slaves.[1] Slaves of the passion and immorality of so-called descendants of the Prophet, who says to his followers, 'He who educates his slave-girl, and frees her, and marries her, shall be doubly rewarded.'

Arabia has to abolish slavery, or all its love of freedom, all its ancient nobility, and all its poetry are not worth a tent-peg.

After the bad news about the slaves that morning, I heard the sound of music in the street below. I looked out, and there, for the first time in Hudaidah, I saw the troubadours of the hills—a drum, a flute and a tambourine—playing a light languid rhythm and chanting what I readily recognized, having heard it twice before, once in Bajel and once on the road to San'a. It was the story of Joseph in captivity, as related in the Koran.

Were a poet to compose the story of the twenty-five slaves and to enhance its poignancy with a historical allusion or a fancy, I do not think it would ever occur to him to end it as chance has done so adequately and so eloquently in this epilogue—the story of Joseph. It was full of pathetic charm. The musicians, who had no knowledge of the preceding chapters, played their part with remarkable understanding, as if they themselves had written the story; and they were unconscious of the little irony which their graceful steps reflected and the fetching pauses of their chant emphasized. They were not Greek dancers: but that turn of the head, that bend of the body down, and that light step forward were unmistakable. They made me forget, I must confess, the Abyssinian slaves on their long and frightful march to Midi. The little sisters of Joseph will be sold for £50 each, and not one of them, I think, will be asked to interpret her master's dream; not

[1] The Koran neither sanctions nor prohibits slavery; but it recognizes it in the verse (chap. iv. p. 60, Sale's Trans.): '*or the slaves which ye shall have acquired.*' On the other hand, there are both in the Koran and the Hadith many sayings both recommending and enjoining the freeing of slaves, and offering rewards for it in this world and the next.

unless she is fair of face and plump, and the seed of the infamous one prospers in her womb. That is her only hope of freedom.

The little black girl, she also dreamed
Of a prince and a palace in Lubberland ;
But never in Love's saddest song
Heard she of whips and marches long
In the Yaman sun and the burning sand.

THE DAY OF DEPARTURE

The sails are sagging in the mists of morn ;
The waves are crawling languid to the beach ;
The sun is white with heat ; the wind's still-born,
And like a wasp, the moisture,—like a leech.

Beneath the crumbling wall the lizard lies ;
To shade of minaret the bustard clings ;
Prostrate the camel, and the camel-flies
Are wondering what's the matter with their wings.

But lo ! they're on the job—the *sanbook*-man,
The *hammal*, and the Arab with a gun,
And those who trudge behind the caravan ;—
Sons of the soil and masters of the sun.

HUDAIDAH, 5*th July*, 1922.

END OF PART II

PART III

AAL SABAH, THE SHEIKHS OF KUWAIT

KUWAIT

BOUNDARIES.—To the east, the Persian Gulf; to the north, the west and the south, a line beginning at the intersection of the 30th of lat. and the 48th of long. and extending in a half-circle westwardly through Ash-Shaqq, southwardly through the Shuqaiq, and passing between Mt. Burqan and Mt. Qorain to Ras ul-Qaliyah on the Gulf.

Note.—The neutral zone between Kuwait and Najd is bounded by a line from Ras ul-Qaliyah extending inland to Khabrat'ud-Dawish, thence about forty miles in a south-easterly direction to within a few miles from the 48th long. and thence due east to Ain ul-'Abd and the Gulf.

AREA.—Four thousand square miles.

POPULATION.—One hundred and twenty thousand souls, eighty thousand of which are in the city of Kuwait. The rest are mostly of the roving Bedu.

IMPORTANT TOWNS.—Jahrah, outside the city, is the only important town in the Sheikhdom of Kuwait. The other known spots as Wabrah, Subaihiyah, Khabrah and Umm'ur-Ruous are watering places, where often are encampments of the Bedu.

SECTS.—Sunnis, Shi'is, Wahhabis, Parsis, Hindus, and a few Christians and Jews.

CHAPTER I

KUWAIT

I HAD promised my brothers of the road that I would enter with them into Kuwait riding upon my *zelul*; but when we got within wind of the city, an automobile, coming our way, stopped before our caravan. It was from His Highness Sheikh Ahmad, and I had to alight to salaam, at least, the gentleman who had come out to meet us. I also had to break my promise with my *rafiqs* and thus deprive myself of the pleasure I had anticipated.

The change, after journeying forty days on a camel, was disagreeable. It even made me sick, literally as well as figuratively sick. I was smuggled into Kuwait like a malefactor, and I had a twinge of conscience in abandoning, at what seemed the first sight of a wheel, my faithful and patient camel. It was caddish. My *rafiqs* may have forgiven me, but my Omaniyah—never. I certainly deserved the headache, which was the result of the speed and the smell of benzine. To her, it must have been a heart-breaking experience.

No, it was not the end we had visualized. That my *zelul* be led by the halter through the city gate, and that I be taken like a cat in a bag into the city, were indeed a grievous thing, an irony that slays. For a caravan, no matter how big, is, in the desert, only a caravan; and a traveller, whoever he be, is, in the desert, only a traveller. Aye, in those vast and empty spaces, both man and beast are of no more importance than their shadows on the sand; both man and beast are equal in the eye of desolation.

But when a caravan nears the town dwellings, or when

it is within the shadow of the city palms, its importance looms of a sudden in its own consciousness and outside of it. It enters the great gate of the city with not a little of pride and joy; it passes through the streets, a solemn pageant of new-born life; or like an army returning victorious from battle, every member of it sits upon his high throne and is great in the consciousness of having conquered death. An illusion, no doubt; but not without an innocent fascination. It held me, when I visualized it, as would a painting of beauty and power. And perhaps because it was a new experience with me, the satisfaction I had promised myself of entering the city as a conqueror was not greater than the disappointment I felt in the deprivation.

But in the change was a compensating surprise; for one of the men who came out to meet me, bringing a letter of welcome from Sheikh Ahmad, was my old friend Yousuf Shalabi All Badr of Basrah. He was then visiting the Sheikh of Kuwait, and his joy in meeting me was, as he expressed it, 'like the joy of the thirsty earth in a shower of rain.'

It was at the banquet given by Sheikh Ameen Basha'yan in his villa at Salihiyah, outside of Basrah, when we last met; and Yousuf Shalabi, who sat near me, was an admirable example of a stalwart Arab at a spread. His art and power in stowing away the rice fascinated me, especially that it gave him a chance to exhibit in motion his large but tapering fingers. I was then on the eve of departure for Najd, and I asked Yousuf to tell me if I had attained any proficiency in the art of eating rice with my hand. He watched me make a ball and said: 'I cannot give you a testimonial yet; you need more practice. Observe.' He thrust his hand into the platter, made a circular line, as if describing his own boundaries, and taking up a handful, he squeezed the butter out of it, rolled it into a ball, and sent it, like a stone from a sling, into his mouth, without a single grain dropping from his

SHEIKH AHMAD ALJABER AAL SABAH.
Ruler of Kuwait.

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hand or remaining upon his fingers. Praised be Allah who has made perfection the highest aim of life. Even the proper use of a knife and fork might be rendered superfluous in the presence of such art.

I told Yousuf Shalabi that I was going to Najd and that, after practising there, I would come back to him for a testimonial. But I did not even imagine that my jest would, four months after, become a reality. When I recalled the words to him, he laughed and said : 'We shall examine you at the Palace to-day and give you the diploma, *inshallah.*'

Kuwait is now a walled city, thanks to the Ikhwan. For after the battle of Jahrah, the inhabitants, to protect themselves against the attacks of the fierce brotherhood of Najd, all volunteered to build the wall, which is about five miles and runs in a circular direction with its two ends on the Gulf. Its height is not more than ten feet, its thickness, from three to five ; it has three gates, several turrets, and a circular running-path for firing ; and it was built in two months by the people of Kuwait themselves, every one contributing in money, in labour, or in both.

We entered the city at the first hour of day, as the Arabs calculate time, that is at sunrise, and stopped in the public square, where we alighted from the car and walked towards a house, against whose wall were stone benches filled with people. The man sitting in the centre arose as we approached and every one else arose with him. It was Sheikh Ahmad Aljaber Aal Sabah, the ruler of Kuwait, who had come out of his Palace with his retinue, accompanied by some of his relatives, to welcome us in public, in the place he holds his daily public *majlis.* There is nothing more democratic and more friendly in Arabia than these royal receptions in the open, before the people. It is not only a great honour to the traveller to be thus received, but a public proclamation that he is an honoured guest, so no one will molest him.

Sheikh Ahmad is a man of middle age, of medium

height, and prepossessing. He is meticulous in dress, soft of voice, elegant of gesture, and more Arian than Semitic in type. Were it not for his sandals and his Arab clothes he might be taken for a Muslem from the Punjab or a European from Spain. The Arabs of Kuwait dress as the Arabs of Najd, except that members of the ruling family wear the Sherifian *ighal* of gold thread, while most of the natives wear the heavy woollen head-cord of the tribesmen of Iraq.

His Highness expressed his surprise that one like myself, 'come from the land of civilization, where travel is as easy as it is in books,' should be able to make such a long and arduous journey across the desert—and upon a *zelul*. 'Even the Arabs dread this route from Buraidah to Kuwait. I congratulate you.' After the coffee was served, he rose saying that he did not wish to delay my needed rest and that we shall have many conversations during my visit. Yousuf Shalabi and the other gentleman, one of the Sabahs, were therefore ordered to conduct me to the Palace, while His Highness tarried at the public *majlis*, where half an hour later he also received my men and gave orders about their lodgings.

At the palace there was a supreme moment; but naught that titillates the vanities or gratifies the passions is here implied. It was a moment for the eye and its singular esoteric connections; my ecstasy was first purely aesthetic. I was in a real palace, a colonnaded, white-stone palace on the Gulf; and it is furnished in the European style, without tawdriness and without clutter. But does this justify the ecstasy of one who had come from a city of palaces, sumptuously furnished and artistically decorated, where everyone may make his home—may freely make himself a guest—for at least a loafing while? Where in all the world is there any palace, public or private, like the modern hotels of New York? But bear in mind that I did not come to Ibn Sabah in an aeroplane directly from New York.

I had come from the desert—I had crossed a score of dry deserts—and my eye was that of a beduin who had never before seen a house of stone. Aye, four months in inland Arabia effaced for a moment—the supreme moment !—the memory of forty years of civilization. I saw for the first time one of the achievements of civilized man. Smile not at my ecstasy. If you have accompanied me through the 'Uroudh and across the Dahna, you will realize what it is to stand in a colonnaded verandah overlooking the Gulf, what it is to sit upon a soft couch, to drink pure water in a glass, and to behold a bed and clean linen.

More than that. After sitting upon a soft couch and drinking pure water in a clean glass, you cannot but lift up your head in thankfulness ; and there, in the ceiling of the reception hall, is a feature of decoration which is, at least, original. I had not seen the like of it before. Yes, in one of the ancient houses of Seville is a ceiling of carved wood, done in square panels, in each of which is a carved head of one of the kings of Spain. But in the palace of Ibn Sabah the faces that you see above you are not those of kings ; nor is the decoration in wood or plaster. The whole ceiling is fitted with gilded frames in which are the chromos of the queens and the famous actresses of the world ! I preferred, even in moments of exaltation, to look at the rugs on the floor. But the ceiling of the bedroom was likewise decorated, and that was annoying. I can only sleep lying on my back, and I had to shut my eyes, therefore, long before 'the balm of each day's life' touched my lids.

But I must go back to the supreme moment, which was followed by another, less aesthetic, though not less gratifying. The servants came with the supper—two, three, four of them carrying trays upon their heads ; and when my friend and companion Yousuf Shalabi invited me to the spread, lo ! a ravishing surprise. Here was a symphony in gastronomy. The central theme is the rice, and around it is composed a richly ornamented chain of

mysterious dishes, in which vegetables predominate. Vegetables! and among the vegetables the famous tomatoes of Kuwait, which are a delicacy in Basrah and Baghdad. This, you will admit, is a happy change from the rice and sand which were cooked for us in the desert by Misfer and the four winds. You will also forgive the enthusiasm with which I welcomed this spread of Ibn Sabah. I attacked it with what must have seemed, even to Yousuf Shalabi, an unseemly edacity. Besides the tomato, which is of the plum variety and is cooked whole and unskinned, Kuwait is famous for its sole; and on the authority of an English skipper, it is the best in the world. I must have robbed Yousuf of his share of both, after doing justice to the conventional rice in the conventional Arab manner. The sweets too were choice and varied—and mysteriously sweet: an excess of sugar, an excess of butter, an excess of the unknown. But they were in keeping with the richly seasoned dishes. A feast indeed, which competed with the palace for this page. And after we had washed our hands, Yousuf Shalabi Aal Badr, one of the greatest heroes of the spread in Iraq and Kuwait, stood before me in a solemnly official attitude and said: 'By Allah and the Prophet, thou art now a master in stowing, not only the rice, but the whole spread.' He then shook my hand and continued, 'I congratulate thee on what thou hast attained. Thou art now one of us.'

This was flattering, and after he left that evening I continued to suck at his words. I did not go directly to bed, lest I should choke with saccharins. Besides, the moon over the Gulf was more inviting than the bedroom ceiling of queens; and there was on the veranda one of those easy chairs, ugly of line, but irresistible, which are popular in tropic climes. I first saw them in Yukatan and wondered if they are ever used in public, or when one has guests. The second time I saw them was on a P. and O. steamer but they were placed in sequestered nooks on deck, that their owners might enjoy a free and complete

use of them. Not so in an Aden hotel, where, in a row on the veranda, they seemed to read to the men—they cannot be used by women even in bloomers, at least in public—a proclamation of comfort absolutely unrestrained. The special feature of these chairs, besides the movable back, are the two boards that are screwed to the edge of the arms and that are used, by turning them outward, as rests for the legs.

Eminently practical, in the old days, for a bastinado. But what they do to the blood-circulation, I cannot say. I know, however, that there are times, whether to brood or to snooze, when a man finds more comfort in having his feet above his head. Turn out the leg rests that chase away propriety and good manners. Lift up your feet and let your head down—let it go ! You are now in the cradle, in the hammock of dreams. You are more or less than a man, according to how you feel about the Bible and Darwinism. But the moon, which strews her silver upon the Gulf and weaves her magic around the masts in the harbour, will forgive you, if you but dream. Dream, and you will forget your wings. Dream, and you will forget your tail. Dream, and you will forget that your feet are higher than your head, which for the nonce equalizes your two poles of intellect and instinct. I dreamed and dreamed while the soft sea breeze was enveloping me, caressing me, lulling me to sleep. For an hour after that I know not what happened. I am certain, however, that I did not dream ; for I woke up with a chill and I hastened into my room.

I slept. But half an hour later I was twisting in pain—excruciating visceral pain. The supper had become an instrument of torture ; the supreme moment was succeeded by hours of discouragement and despair. From that time till the morning I felt that something was being twisted and torn within me ; something was burning, sizzling, melting. My stomach must have been like a chemical retort. I was decomposing, I was most miserable.

There were all the symptoms, I thought, of cholera. Oh, thou most Merciful and Compassionate, wouldst thou thus punish a glorious fool for an hour of dissipation? Hast thou already forgotten the four lean months—months of asceticism and fever, of genuine, old-fashioned piety in the desert? Wilt thou put the seal of cholera upon my travels in Arabia? Wilt thou in cholera, O God, have me see the end of all things? Or is it a taste of thy mercy given in a dish of the tomatoes of Kuwait?

When Yousuf Shalabi came in the morning, he cried *awwah*! as I was telling my story, and hastened, before I finished, for the doctor. 'That is the doing of the tomatoes,' I heard him say, as he was going out. Soon he came back with the doctor, who confirmed the sentence. The tomatoes of Kuwait were also responsible for the return of Dame Malaria. But, thanks to the doctor, she did not remain more than a day. For a week after that, however, I turned my eyes from every dish that was tinctured, no matter how slightly, with red.

The veranda of the palace opens upon a scene of the chief industry of Kuwait. In the vast court below, around the flagpole and under the red flag with 'Al-Kuwait' in Arabic, in the centre of it, there is always to be seen several groups of workmen busy with the needle around a canvas spread on the ground. They are mending and patching old sails, or sewing new ones. The sail—in its shadow and from its bounties, the Kuwaitis live.

Beyond the court, along the water-front, is a tangle of masts; and there, too, are groups of workmen busy with the hammer and the adze repairing old boats, or building new ones. It is the dry dock of Kuwait, from which are launched the dhows and baggalas that sail across the Gulf and beyond it, perpetuating the trade between India and Iraq, as well as between the towns along the Persian and the Arabian coasts, which are beyond the reach of steam. For another reason, the low rate of freight, the sail is still indispensable.

Most of the boats that one sees up Shatt'ul-Arab and on the Gulf, from the small *balam* to the large *boom*, are made in Kuwait ; and most of them are not only solidly constructed, but beautifully finished. The lines of the *balam* are most elegant, and the carvings on the stern of the *boom* are very artistic. Between the two is a variety of sails, which do not venture beyond the Gulf and the Shatt ; but the *boom*, which is a kind of baggala, with a broader beam and a higher stern, reaches in its long voyages Madagascar and Zanzibar.

Kuwait is not, however, essentially maritime. It is one of the pearl-fishing cities of the Gulf, and its boats were originally made and are almost exclusively used, in the pearl-fishing season, for this purpose. When the season is over, they set out as trading vessels. But they carry little or nothing from Kuwait, because it has little or nothing to export but pearls. For this reason also they come back to Kuwait laden with foodstuffs and merchandise. The pearl merchant, having a surplus capital, thus becomes a general trader ; and this Gulf city has become an emporium like Midi and Hudaidah on the Red Sea.

The Bedu are its principal customers, and most of them come from inland Arabia, from Najd and Al-Qasim, even from Haiel. This trading with the Bedu is called *musabalah*, that is buying on credit. They come mostly in the summer, purchase what they need of food and clothes for the winter, and return in spring, after they have pastured their flocks, to pay their debts and again purchase what they need. But they seldom pay in full at one time, and the Kuwait merchant seldom presses. *Don't hurry, don't worry* is his motto in business ; and that is why they come to him from the distant deserts, from beyond the Dahna. Some of them take two or three years to settle their accounts in full ; but they seldom fail to do so, no matter how long they stay away.

What security do they receive from this roving nomad, who carries his house on his back, whose address is his

tent-pegs? Nothing but his pledged word, *Billah, I'll come back and pay.* 'And if he does not come back for twenty years,' said a merchant to me, 'and then appears in Kuwait with but a mangy camel, he will take it to the merchant his creditor and offer it in payment, or as a part, of his account. And if he dies, one of his children or his relatives will come to pay his debts. Yes, more than once has a beduin come into this place and said: "This money is yours—the debt of So-and-so. Invoke upon him the mercy of Allah."'

But this same beduin, if he needs anything a fellow Arab of the desert possesses, will use the strong arm, even the rifle upon him, and consider it quite lawful. Moreover, the raid and the plunder do not diminish in the least his chances of dying a right Muslem and getting his share of huris in Paradise.

CHAPTER II

AAL SABAH AND THE ENGLISH

It will not, I hope, be considered pedantic, if, for the information of the general reader, I open this chapter with a few elementary remarks about Arab genealogy. Leaving the background of tradition alone, I begin with facts ; and the first of these is that the Arabs are divided into two grand divisions, Qahtan and 'Adnan ; that there are two main groups of 'Adnan, *i.e.* Mudhar and Rabi'ah ; and that Mudhar originally made its home in Al-Hijaz and attained, through Qoraish, the supremacy in Mecca, while Rabi'ah occupied Central Arabia, from Yamamah in Najd up to Iraq.

Now, Rabi'ah is subdivided into Benu Kalb and Benu Asad ; Benu Asad, into Jadilah and 'Aneza ; and from the grand tribe of 'Aneza is descendant Bakr ibn Wa'il, who is the ancestor of the three houses, Aal Sa'oud, Aal Sabah and Aal Khalifah, that rule to-day in Najd and Kuwait and Bahrain respectively. It is well to note also that Mudhar and Rabi'ah, who were enemies of old, are to-day still rivals for supremacy and power. The Prophet is of Mudhar, but most of the great poets and warriors of Arabia are of Rabi'ah, who, in the person of Ibn Sa'oud, Sultan Abdul-Aziz, now also King of Al-Hijaz, is fast attaining the hegemony in all Arabia.

But to go back to our genealogy. The first home of 'Aneza, one of the two principal tribes of Rabi'ah, was Iraq ; and its first migration was westward to Khaibar in Al-Hijaz. From Khaibar it came down to Najd, where

for some time its authority was supreme. But it too was divided into many sub-tribes, one of which is Jumailah; and Jumailah is subdivided into clans, one of which is Shimlan, who is the progenitor of Aal Sabah.

Kuwait was a nonentity in the history of Arabia before the Sabahs established in it their authority; but when they first came from Khaibar, about two hundred and forty years ago, they found Benu Khalid in possession, —the same Benu Khalid who once ruled Al-Hasa and who continue to rove to-day along the Gulf, between Kuwait and Ojair.

The first known Sabah was a diplomat; for instead of falling with his followers upon Benu Khalid and risking a defeat, he accepted from them a permission to be their neighbour. He was also a man of perspicacity and goodness, and Benu Khalid, when in trouble, came to him for advice and assistance. He died their acknowledged leader, and his son Abdullah was elected by them, as well as by his own followers, Sheikh of Kuwait.

Abdullah ruled forty-six years and he died, like his father, a happy man. But his brother Muhammad, who succeeded him, ruled only six years and was then removed by the sword of the third brother Mubarak. This tragedy in the house of Aal Sabah was the beginning of the era of prosperity in Kuwait. It was also the stepping-stone to British intervention, as we shall see.

Mubarak, the third of the four sons of the good Sabah, was a man of ambition, impulsive, tempestuous, truculent, crafty, elusive. He was also very generous and brave. A spendthrift and warrior, he was much liked by the Bedu. The Ottoman Government, which still retained a nominal authority in Kuwait, was helped by the Sabahs, especially by young Mubarak, to conquer Al-Hasa. Sheikh Mubarak was, in fact, a noted figure during the reign of his first brother Abdullah, and he cherished the hope of succeeding him in power.

But he was disappointed; and for six years, during the

reign of Sheikh Muhammad, he suffered many humiliations. The fourth brother Jarrah, whom Mubarak tried to win to his side in the rivalry between him and Muhammad, was an opportunist, and he chose naturally to be with the one in power. He himself, being the stronger, wielded the rein of power, became the real ruler of Kuwait. Mubarak was thus isolated ; and Jarrah, who was also a man of cupidity, tightened the purse-strings. Mubarak's allowance was reduced, even often withheld. He had to seek the help of his mother. He even sold some of her jewels to keep his Bedu retainers satisfied and to pay his gambling debts in Bombay. For four, five, six years, this was the royal state of affairs in Kuwait ; but such a state, royal and roiled, could not go on for ever. Mubarak's cup of humiliation and patience was full. His two brothers, the imbecile Muhammad and the villainous Jarrah, were stumbling blocks in the way of his glory and the glory of Kuwait, and he decided to remove them—remove them he will. But he was in doubt whether his sword could cut off two heads at once, and he therefore made his son a partner in the bloody enterprise. For Kuwait and Ibn Sabah ! Father and son, with drawn swords, walked out in the dead of night to the palace, where Muhammad and Jarrah were fast asleep ; and the father woke up Muhammad and gave him time to say his prayer. But the son did murder sleep. And in the morning following that night of May 1896, Mubarak faced the rising people, outfaced them, threatened them with his Bedu, and proclaimed himself Sheikh of Kuwait.

The city subsided in a few days, accepted its fate, and ultimately found it good. Everybody gave his suffrage to Sheikh Mubarak, except the children of the two murdered brothers, who fled to Basrah, where they appealed to the wali Hamdi Pasha for redress ; and there was another man, a supporter of their cause, who played a leading part in the subsequent events of this tragedy, and who will be mentioned later. But Rajab Pasha, the Wali of Baghdad,

was Hamdi's superior, and Mubarak hastened to send his emissaries to lay his case before him. The emissaries succeeded in their mission; Rajab was convinced, certainly not altogether by argument; and he wrote therefore to the Sublime Porte saying that such affairs are common among the Bedu, and that it is wiser for the Dowlah not to intervene, lest it should precipitate the intervention of the British Government.

The British Government is ever ready, however, but is never in haste. The sons of Jarrah and Muhammad, when they saw that the Wali Hamdi Pasha could not do much for them, appealed to the British Consul in Basrah, who espoused their cause, and whose activities incidentally served also the cause of British diplomacy in the Persian Gulf. Pressure was brought to bear upon the Sublime Porte; and for the sake of the British Government—the Sublime Porte's point of view—an iradé was issued offering Sheikh Mubarak either a high position in the Government at Constantinople or a subsidy in exile. And if he refused both, the Dowlah will be constrained to adopt a more radical measure. But Sheikh Mubarak, when his nephews appealed to the British Consul, sought the aid of the superior officer in the Gulf, the British Political Agent at Abu Shihr (Bushire), who, really ignorant, or feigning ignorance, of what had happened in Basrah, lent a sympathetic ear.

It is a tragicomedy. The children of the murdered brothers petition the Wali of Basrah; their uncle Richard-Mubarak inveigles the Wali of Baghdad; the children appeal to the British Consul; their uncle negotiates with the British Political Agent on the Persian Gulf—and thus the Government of Great Britain plays the double rôle of attorney and attorney-general.

The Dowlah, when its imperial iradé was not heeded by Sheikh Mubarak, decided to use force upon him; and Mubarak, in self-defence, placed himself under the protection of the British Government. The English were

invited to come into Kuwait: the ripe fruit of intervention fell in their lap, and they took it up—reluctantly. Indeed, when a Turkish gunboat came to Kuwait to force Mubarak out of it—for the pleasure of Downing Street—a man-o'-war came from Abu Shihr—with the sanction of Downing Street of course—and chased the gunboat away. Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.

Let me, at the close of this act in the tragicomedy, go back to the beginning to tell the story of the one man who did more than the children of the murdered brothers, more even than the Dowlah, to make Mubarak worry. Yousuf Aal Ibrahim, a man of generosity and courage and influence among the tribes, was also one of the richest merchants of Kuwait; and he was in himself a Dowlah against Mubarak. For ten years, to avenge the murdered brothers, he continued in his hostilities, spending his fortune in diplomatic intrigues, as well as in making war.

The first move against Mubarak was from the Gulf. A squadron of sails filled with armed men, led by Yousuf Aal Ibrahim himself, came into the harbour of Kuwait by night and were about to attack the city; but they were seen by a boatman, who carried the news to Sheikh Mubarak. Early in the morning, therefore, the usurper appeared along the water-front with a multitude of the citizens of Kuwait; the whole city was with him; and 'Admiral' Yousuf, who had thought that the city was against Mubarak, seeing the contrary, ordered his squadron to withdraw from the harbour. Not a shot was fired on either side.

His second move was a strategy of war. He hired several freebooters and ordered them to get into a boat at night and enter into Kuwait in the morning, saying that they had gone out in pursuit of the men of Yousuf Aal Ibrahim. Sheikh Mubarak would reward them by taking them into his service, and they were then to assassinate

him. The bandits did as they were told ; and Sheikh Mubarak did as Yousuf imagined he would do : he added the bandits to his bodyguard ; but before they could carry out their pledge, one of them, in an access of contrition, revealed the plot to the Sheikh, who, in an access of compassion, did not cut off their heads, but only banished them from Kuwait.

Yousuf Aal Ibrahim then went to Constantinople, where his activities against Mubarak did run in the same channel with those of the British Ambassador ; and he thought he had triumphed when the Imperial iradé was issued and a gunboat was subsequently sent to Kuwait to enforce it. But Yousuf did not know that his enemy had already established connections with Abu Shihr, and that Abu Shihr, following instructions from the Foreign Office, was to pursue its own Gulf policy, one of the aims of which was a foothold in Kuwait.

Nevertheless, Yousuf did not capitulate. An implacable enemy, with a good cause to feed his implacability and money to make it mighty in action, he turned his face towards the desert. He journeyed to Haiel, to the Ameer of Shammar, Abd'ul-Aziz ibn'ur-Rashid, the enemy of Ibn Sabah ; and soon they marched out, Yousuf and Ibn'ur-Rashid, at the head of an army of Shammar braves, bent on conquering and sacking Kuwait. But Sheikh Mubarak learned of this, and he hastened with his forces to meet them in the desert. He sent out one army under the leadership of Abd'ul-Aziz ibn Sa'oud, who was then with his father an exile in Kuwait ; another army was led by his brother Hamoud ibn Sabah ; while Mubarak himself marched at the head of the third army, and Abd'ur-Rahman ibn Sa'oud, father of Abd'ul-Aziz, was with him. The Sa'ouds welcomed the opportunity to fight against their enemy and conqueror of their country, Ibn'ur-Rashid. The enemies met at a place called Sareef, where a pitched battle was fought in February 1904, which resulted in the defeat of the forces of Kuwait.

But Abd'ul-Aziz ibn Sa'oud, after that battle, marched southward with the scatterings of his army, bent upon conquering Ar-Riyadh, the capital of his country Najd. This was the first of his independent raids and the first of his triumphs in central Arabia. Ar-Riyadh was taken, the governor of Ibn'ur-Rashid was slain, and Sheikh Mubarak received the news with a transport of delight. 'Keep it up, *ya w'lidi* (O my little son),' he wrote to Abd'ul-Aziz, and he sent him reinforcements. But Abd'ul-Aziz needed no encouragement. His march northward to Al-Qasim was a series of triumphs, which kept Ibn'ur-Rashid away from Kuwait, and which culminated in his death in 1906 at the battle of Rowdhat Mahanna. Sheikh Mubarak's other enemy, Yousuf Aal Ibrahim, had died the year before; and for ten years after that his reign in Kuwait was blessed with peace and prosperity. He was the strongest Arab ruler of his time; his influence was supreme at Muhammarah and Basrah; his word was heard at Abu-Shihr; the Bedu were under his thumb; and the young conqueror of central Arabia, Abd'ul-Aziz Ibn Sa'oud, he managed, by fair means or foul, to keep on his side.

In the agreement between Sheikh Mubarak and the British Government, he pledged himself not to enter into treaty relations with other foreign powers; he permitted the establishment of a British Agency in Kuwait; and he was to receive in return protection against any attack from the Gulf. But the land side was left to the native authority; the British Government would not interfere in the affairs of the tribes. No subsidy was paid; and the advice of the British Political Agent in certain matters the Sheikh was free to accept or refuse. This agreement still stands, but the margin of freedom is not the same to-day as it was in the days of Mubarak. Last year it was decided that all cases in which foreigners are involved should not be tried at the native courts but at the British Agency.

Another treaty, in the days of Mubarak, was entered into between the British and the Ottoman Governments, by virtue of which the latter relinquished its sovereignty in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and Maskat, and the former undertook to patrol the Gulf, attend to its lighting, and keep it open for navigation.

Sheikh Mubarak died in February 1915 and was succeeded by his son Jaber, who was a benevolent ruler. He abolished many of the taxes with which his father had burdened the people. But he ruled fourteen months only and was succeeded on his death by his brother Salem, who governed Kuwait and increased its riches, as well as his own, through contraband, during the world war. For in spite of the agreement with Great Britain, which made him automatically one of the Allies, and in spite of the British control and embargo, Kuwait continued, with the cognizance of its Sheikh, nay, his assistance, to receive merchandise, foodstuffs, and ammunition from Eastern ports, and tranship them through the desert to the Turks and the Germans in Syria and Palestine.

If Sheikh Salem enriched Kuwait, however, he brought upon it, through his fanaticism and shortsightedness, the chastisement of the Ikhwan. He hated the Wahhabis, and he could not retain, like his father and brother, the friendship of Ibn Sa'oud. But not long after his defeat and humiliation at the battle of Jahrah,[1] he died in the winter of 1921 and was succeeded by his nephew, Sheikh Ahmad ibn Jaber ibn Mubarak, the present ruler of Kuwait.

When the relations between Kuwait and Najd were strained Sheikh Ahmad was sent to Ar-Riyadh on a mission of peace, which, with the aid of fate, he successfully accomplished. For while he was negotiating with Ibn Sa'oud, news came that Sheikh Salem had died. But Kuwait, in spite of the moderation and the friendly attitude of Sheikh Ahmad, who is much liked by Sultan

[1] *See* Part III, chap. I. p. 237.

Abd'ul-Aziz, is still suffering from the shortsighted policy of its former ruler. Its trade, which is mostly dependent upon the Bedu of Najd, has been reduced woefully the past few years. The merchants have certainly lost the fortunes which they had made during the war.

END OF PART III

PART IV

AAL KHALIFAH, THE SHEIKHS OF BAHRAIN

BAHRAIN

BOUNDARIES.—An island in the Gulf, near the Arabian coast, between Qatar and Qatif, with other small islands around it, two of which are Maharraq, east of it, and Bidaiya' to the west. It is situated near the 31st of long., and is cut in half by the 26th parallel.

AREA.—Four hundred and fifty square miles.

POPULATION.—Two hundred thousand souls.

IMPORTANT TOWNS.—Manamah (the capital), Maharraq, Rifa', Al-Hadd, Al-Bidaiya'.

SECTS.—Sunnis of the four persuasions ; Ja'faris and Isma'ilis of the Shi'ah ; Wahhabis, Hindus, Parsis, Christians, and Jews.

CHAPTER I

A CHAIN OF SURPRISES

FROM Kuwait to Abu-Shihr (Bushire), a night's journey, and lo, we are in the harbour of romance. This Persian town on the Gulf may be as dull and drab as the one we have just left on the Arabian side ; but behind it are the mountains of Fars, veiled in violet haze, and beyond the mountains, a hundred and eighty miles, is Shiraz—the very Shiraz which the poet Hafiz gave away for a mole of beauty on the face of the beloved. From those hills and beyond, from spicy vales and magic looms, comes the messenger of romance carrying precious tokens under gently breathing sails of different colours ; a train of dhows, bathed in the softly falling autumn sun, which meets the utmost of human desire for warmth and cheer, moves majestically through a halcyon calm, between the city and the steamer. It is a joy to watch them approach, and to muse upon the gifts they bring ; pomegranates and gum tragacanth, rugs and rose-leaves, and *tambac* (Persian tobacco) for thy pipe of *keif*, O thou Sybarite Syrian of New York, and the Mole of Beauty herself in search of a new Paradise. They come, the galleys of romance.

But as soon as they are within the shadow of the steamer what a disenchantment ! What a demoniac scream, what a babble of raucous voices, what a confusion of sounds, what an anarchy of struggling, rushing, climbing, leaping, ragged and half-naked human forms : coolies from Persia and Arabistan, carriers of tambac and rugs, bearers of the pomegranates of paradisaic vales, they make the most

beautiful in sea and sky a hideous sight, a thing to be for ever shunned. Have a rose from Shiraz? Or would you have a human brass band instead? Rugs from Ispahan, where is the magic of your loom? Gum tragacanth from the gardens of Tabrize, where is the scented calm of love content? What visions of vanished bliss haunt us in life! And what visions of beauty help us to make life a tolerable business.

Another day's journey towards the Arab coast again, and we are in the waters of Bahrain, about four miles from land. In less than half an hour we are besieged by *jalbouts* laden with dates and wool and passengers Bombay-bound. The *jalbouts* carrying the passengers and their baggage look as if the contents of a moving van had been dumped into them. The steamer is invaded in a trice, and the shouts and cries are worse than those of the sailors of Abu Shihr.

Bahrain, one would think, belongs to British India; for as soon as the steamer anchors, a motor launch—a giant launch or a small yacht, as you please—comes out, with the British Political Agent and his distinguished household on board, for no other purpose, perhaps, than a little cruise. He sat on deck in a wicker chair, the B.P.A., flanked by two ladies in Sunday-go-to-meeting hats; and he seemed to be surveying the traffic and watching the passengers, particularly those who travel first class or appear of any importance. But no one was of more importance that morning than himself; for besides the ladies and the yacht, there stood near the helm, with hands folded across their breasts, two slaves in uniforms of red and gold—the Indian flunkey uniform of officialdom. Which brings us back to the first impression—Bahrain belongs to British India. The earmark and the bond, behold them in the flunkies. I saw none in Baghdad, nor, for that matter, in Aden. But in Bahrain, which is to any agent, political or commercial, an exile, the poor doomed incumbent ought to be allowed at least this luxury. If

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Baghdad choses to dress her king in mufti, that is her business. She certainly has no power and no right to impose her fashions, her modern democratic craze, upon Bahrain. Nor will the Sheikhs of the ruling family permit it. For is not this the Isle of Pearls? and does she not give up of her treasures more than a million pounds' worth a year? No matter how much the shrewd Bunia—the Bombay merchant—and he who comes from Paris to bargain with Bahrain, get out of this sum, the residue is still very considerable, and, in one way or another, it has to be spent.

Having come to Bahrain with a mistaken idea—I had thought, in my ignorance, that it was but a stepping-stone to Al-Hasa—the yacht and the flunkies of British officialdom were, indeed, a surprise. But in the city of Manamah, which is bigger than Kuwait, and which is adorned along the water-front with palaces, there are attractive bazars, where one can buy even a Japanese thermos bottle, and important commercial houses with large iron safes, desks, bookkeepers, and settees for guests, and apparently no business. The reason for this is that Bahrain is another emporium for central Arabia; and most of the merchandise that comes to it from Persia and Iraq, as well as from India and the Far East, is transhipped by *jalbouts* to Ojair and Qatif, and thence by camels across the Dahna to Najd and Al-Qasim, even as far as Bishah and Najran. Here then is another surprise for an ignorant traveller.

But this island can boast of more than official splendour and commercial importance. It can even boast of the nobler pearl, the more enduring pearl of poesy. Aye, there are Arab poets in Bahrain; and public schools, where children are taught physiology and physics; and a literary club, where the theory of Einstein as well as the fourteen points of Woodrow Wilson are debated; and there are automobiles from Detroit, and windmills from Chicago.

We have not reached the end of the chain of surprises.

In the evening of the day of my arrival a man came to see me, and after introducing himself in an American accent that was still familiar, he asked me to dinner at his house the following day. Like his windmill, he, too, is from Chicago; but he is doing much better work; it is steady in its benefits and not dependent upon the winds of chance. Dr. Dame is the medical head of the American Mission in Bahrain,[1] which consists of a hospital and a pharmacy, a church and a school, and a home where I met, besides the charming Mrs. Dame, three un-missionary-looking ladies, three tall, leonine blondes—missionary workers nonetheless—from New Jersey. They were then learning Arabic, these brave girls, and their work consisted in making visits to the women of the harim, where they instilled the spirit, not so much of the Christian religion as of the Christian way of living. They taught by example. They and Dr. Dame are pioneers.

But a great deal more can be done by these good Americans, if they do not insist on evangelizing among the Arabs. The business of saving souls no longer flourishes in the East—it never did flourish in Muslem countries. Fifty years of Bible teaching, and prayer meetings, and organs and hymns, have not converted one Muslem. Why then persist in the folly? The Arab is eminently satisfied with his own religion, and he shuns religious controversy.[2] He is not inimical to education; but he will not, as a rule, send his children to a Christian school that teaches also the Bible. Why not then cut out the Bible and increase

[1] The Arabian Mission, under the direction of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church of America, has branches also in Basrah and Kuwait.

[2] 'In Koriat (along the coast of Oman) we were entertained by the Wali. He seemed greatly honoured by our visit. His specialty did not seem to me to be religion. When I opened religious discussion he had the habit of leaving. Asking why he repeatedly did this, the man told me that he went out to have a smoke.... He (the Wali of Sur) was not at all fanatic. It was quite plain, however, that he had objection to religious discussion in the presence of the other man. He said such discussions did not benefit. They would never become Christians, and we would never become Muslems.'—Rev. G. D. Van Peursem, in *Neglected Arabia*, No. 122, pp. 3 and 7.

A HOUSE IN MANAMAH, BAHRAIN.

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manifold the attendance? I say this advisedly. If we can teach the Arab sanitation and hygiene, and a right way of thinking; if we can but shift a little his ancient point of view and bring him under the wholesome Christian influence through education, we would be wanting in the right Christian spirit if we did not do so.

'I'm sorry,' said Dr. Dame, as he took me through his little hospital, 'that I cannot show you a foot-ulcer; plenty of them—bare feet, of course, and neglect—some days we have as many as twenty for treatment. . . .' But why should a doctor be anxious to show a layman an open wound, a running sore, an ulcerous bit of anatomy? One does not have to go to a hospital in the towns of Arabia to see these. I did want to see, however, what the American gentleman from Chicago was doing in Bahrain. The only part of his little hospital that suggested a home institution were the office and the operation room. The latter is all white and clean—the only white spot, in fact, in this refuge for suffering humanity.

I did long to see a white sheet, a white bedstead, an angel of mercy in white, as we went through the different wards; and I wished that our example of cleanliness to a people who are clean only in the desert, were more appealing. How much the Arabs, the Orientals, can endure of pain and squalor is nowhere so evident as in a hospital like Dr. Dame's. Nevertheless, he is doing noble work in Bahrain. What he has to face every day, and continue to enjoy a dinner, is not beyond my power to describe, but beyond my desire to relate. One thing I must say, however, in justice to the Arabian Mission; like every philanthropic institution, it has been pinched during the world war and is still suffering from a stinted fund. If our people at home could be made to realize that neglected Arabia, from a medical point of view at least, has as much claim to our attention as Armenia, Dr. Dame's hospital would be more worthy of the American name. The Mission, I was told, cannot even afford to feed the patients,

who must bring with them their food, as well as a servant or a relative to attend upon them. But the Arabs are thankful for what they get; and their only complaint against the American medicine man is that he carries a Bible in his pocket. 'Even the medicine,' one of them told me, 'is given to us wrapped in missionary tracts.'

I came out of the hospital wishing that America might institute a new method of bringing Western civilization to Asia. *Bring it without the Bible.* They have plenty of religion, the Asiatics, as good or as bad as our own in practice, and what they need most, their only need, in fact, is sanitation and hygiene. Teach them these, and they will have clean cities and less disease; and they will be sincerely grateful. But the best way to teach them is by example. Give them the best that medical science and practice can give; give them, as you give at home, your best.

I was surprised and shocked to see how little England has done or is doing in this direction. Even during the war, the military hospital for Englishmen in Bombay was better equipped technically, to say nothing of the service, than the hospital for the Indian soldiers. This discrimination against the Oriental is mainly responsible for England's, for Europe's loss of prestige in the East.

Bombay itself is an example and a warning. Bombay the old and Bombay the new, the European—they are separate from, and independent of, each other. The line of cleavage is straight and clean and deep. We bring our civilization and set it up at a safe distance from the native quarters, and fence it, as it were, with barbed wire. Socially, the barbed wire is more than a figure of speech. To the European who has his home on Victoria Terrace or lives at the Taj Mahal, the city and its population beyond Crawford Market exist only for European exploitation. Sell these people our wares and leave them alone,—'We should worry.' *You will worry.* You are beginning to worry; and you will yet call for help, and call in vain,

when these people, whom you scorn as men and humour as customers, rise against you and pull down your palaces over your heads. Indeed, we should keep out of the Orient if we cannot give the Orient our best. Dr. Dame agrees with me. As far as he is concerned, he is giving his best; but he could give more, if he had more funds and if his hospital and the evangelical Mission were independent, at least, of each other.

Returning from the hospital, I heard a voice crying, *Mashmoum*! It rose out of the maze of streets from no particular direction and from everywhere like the sound of a bell—*Mashmou-ou-ou-m*! Soon it drew near; and turning a corner, a man with a tray on his head was walking towards me, swinging his arms—*Mashmoum*! A door opened, at which he stopped; and a delicate hand was stretched out, holding a coin. The man took down his tray and gave the girl a bouquet of jasmine and myrtle. He is the flower seller, who comes twice a day, morning and evening. In the morning, the harim buy the myrtle and jasmine for their hair; in the evening, they buy some flowers to spread on the diwan and bed for their lords and masters. Yet, these lords and masters are not satisfied. The female population of the island does not help them to be orthodoxly polygamous.

In Bahrain polygamy has undergone no change. Nor has it yet suffered from any of the modern influences of Cairo and Angora. We still have our wives, its men seem to say, and we don't care what you do with yours. We follow the law of the Prophet, as set down in the Book—two, or three, or four, according to a man's ability and sense of justice; but our only trouble in observing the law is the lack of women. There are not enough to honour the Prophet. That is what I was told. The women are beautiful—I cannot demur to the evidence of an eye-witness—but they are not plentiful.

Most every man in the island of pearls is capable of supporting the three or the seven graces, were they

available. But he has to go out of the island to the Persian coast-towns, or to Kuwait or Oman or Basrah, even to India, seeking material for the replenishment of his cherished harim. Such a condition is a pedestal for woman; and as for divorce, a fig for your prerogative, O Mere Man. Khadijah or Fatimah snaps her fingers and walks out. Many a turbaned and scented sheikh welcomes the opportunity that will save him a sea voyage. Allah be praised, exclaims Muhammad ibn Ahmad in the house on the corner. I do not have to go to Basrah. To the Qadi (judge) instead. And Khadijah, who an hour ago snapped her fingers in the face of one husband, now claps her hands for joy of another. But in general the man of Bahrain is hit hard. Darn it, or Billah! he exclaims. I haven't enough wives to support.

His sorrow is particularly poignant, when he has a large house, like the one I occupied, with many rooms in it that are vacant. The guest-house of Qasaibi is more like a museum bisected by two corridors into four big parts, which are surrounded on all sides by a wide veranda, adorned with columns of plastered stones, three feet in diameter, and overlooking the Gulf from the north and the city from the west and the east. The view from the north veranda is particularly interesting to an artist, who could sit for hours studying the composition of sails in motion. How they approach each other, pass by each other, part from each other, each shifting version of the composition having its own value; while the background of other sails expresses from all angles the harbour scene and adds a suggestive beauty to the foreground, which had already changed a dozen times, forming each time a picture more pleasing than the one preceding it. Often in enjoying this scene I have thought of some of the aquatints of John Taylor Arms.

The face of the Gulf is that of a youth—not a line, not a ruffle upon it; and the tide is as taciturn, but not as solemn as an Arab. A delicious breeze sweeps over it

northward at the ebb, southward at the flow, giving it the texture of chiffon silk ; and on it, to and fro, move an hundred sails—move slowly, leisurely, dreamily, like a new-born idea in an Arab's brain. The sea of Bahrain is a mirror of its people's soul in the paradisaical months ; for after the diving season, and when the merchants from Bombay and Paris had come and gone, those of the Island that are more ambitious in seeking *keif*, go to India, while the others remain at home to lull themselves in the soft caressing breezes of a friendly winter. Let us sit down and drink coffee, and talk politics, or tell fairy tales ; or let us, with our falcons, to the hunt : the oyster believeth not in birth-control, and the all-bounteous sea of Bahrain will continue to support the oyster for what there is in its bosom, *inshallah.*

But the musings of those who live in proximity to the water cannot be too rosy at low tide, or their olfactory nerves are dull. The ulcerous bed of the Gulf along the coast cries *mashmoum* ! and those who can smell can hear. It was an hour when to me the view was spoiled ; the breakfast too, for the ebbing, during my visit, took place in the morning. There was, however, a compensation ; it gave me real pleasure to see that the Bahrain donkey, who is being fast elbowed out of life by the car that comes from Detroit, has a little business at low tide, which he alone can do. For those who move between Manamah and Maharraq and do not care to wade, or cannot wade, through the bog and the water to the boats, a quarter of a mile out, have to hire a donkey for the purpose.

Three places in Arabia are famous for the animals they produce ; namely, Oman for its dromedaries, Najd for its horses, and Al-Hasa for its donkeys. Those of Bahrain are from Al-Hasa, but they are comelier and shapelier, particularly the female of the stock. She is plump and fair, the white she-ass, and not a bit slow ; and she used to sell for a hundred and fifty gold pounds in pre-Ford days. Now the man from Michigan is cursed by the pearl divers

and blessed by the pearl merchants. 'I am selling thirty of my donkeys,' one of them said; 'they cost me too much to feed—much more than a *mowtah* (motor car). And I fly to my palm garden in the country whenever I please, without having to humour a she-ass into service. They are spoiled, our donkeys, and too well fed. Do you know why they are plump and fair? Because fish is their food and dates their dessert.' We were walking through the street, and he stopped to show me the fish. 'This is one of our fish stores,' he said. His words need no correction, for he took me later to the fish market. But this was a store filled with piles, like haystacks, of little fish, which are dried in the sun and sold by the bushel. Living as they do on dried sardines and dates, the she-asses of Bahrain must be as happy as its women. They were so at least in the pre-Ford period.

I can speak both for their beauty and their quality as mounts; for one of them carried me out to the boat when we went to visit the Sheikh of Bahrain, who has a winter palace at Maharraq,[1] about five miles east of Manamah. Not all the people that come and go between these two islands, however, ride through the receding tide on donkeys; most of them, men, women and children, wade merrily across to the boats and then from the boats to the shore, lifting their garments above their legs, even above their bosoms; and wading they laugh and play, splashing each other with water. No bathing scene along the Jersey coast can surpass in its nudity and merriment this of Bahrain; but here is no cause for a whispering mind—nothing that betrays a suggestive thought, a prurient fancy. The naturalness on the part of the women, however, is spoiled by a tradition: they will wade like the men, but they will not uncover their faces. One of them, when we reached Maharraq, surprised me with her generosity, as she stepped out of the boat into the water, which was only

[1] Maharraq (place of burning) is where the ancient Persians—the Magi—who occupied the island, burned their dead.

two feet deep; but she must have imagined it was a fathom, or she preferred the sun as a garment; and my companion, seeing me hesitate with the camera, said: 'It is something familiar; there is no harm in taking the picture.'

The streets of Maharraq are as wide or as narrow as those of Manamah; but some of them are wide enough to admit a car and a few accidents. The bazar is very attractive and is redolent in truth of ambergris and musk. After meandering through it to the residential quarter, we turned into an avenue of human forms, statuesque and stunted in the pose. On both sides of the street, against the walls, squatted a hundred odd Arabs, silent and sombre and immobile. They may be either the retainers of the Grand Sheikh, or a certain class of his daily visitors, whose rank admits them no farther, unless they have a cause or a grievance. Near the entrance were a few men with falcons on poles; they are the mascots of the hunt.

The Grand Sheikh of Bahrain, Sheikh 'Isa Aal Khalifah, sat in state in a vast open court with benches of stone Roman-like around the walls, where more Arabs, swords or sticks in hand, statuesquely graced the scene. I first thought that I was passing through another assembly of honour to the royal presence; but when I reached the centre of the grand court, an old man, slight of stature and of beard, in robes not unlike those of the members of the royal cousins that sat around him, stood up to receive me, and taking me by the hand, offered me the vacant place to his right. Sheikh 'Isa was no longer the ruler of Bahrain, this function having been delegated with the consent, the sanction, or the order, as you will, of the British Agent, to his son Sheikh Hamad. But he was still a majestic background, with two living torches under soft white brows; and his coffee-bearers were the most picturesque and imposing I had seen in Arabia. In six feet of orange-coloured cloth, a saffron sash, an embroidered *koufiyah* of cashmere wool held by an *ighal* of gold thread, approached majestically a broad-shouldered Arab,

with features neither ingratiating nor ferocious, bearing a very large coffee-pot, whose lines are like those of an hour-glass, with a spout like a crescent and a cover as shapely as a Cellini vase. Beside him walked a boy in blue and gold carrying the cups. They stood before the Grand Sheikh, who motioned them towards me. The boy handed a cup to his chief, who poured in it a thimbleful from his magnificent vase-like thing of brass, and presented it to me with his right hand. I took it with my left and lost my reputation as a scholar and well-bred man.

The assembly was shocked, as I learned later at the house of Sheikh 'Isa's cousin, where I took the cup with my right and was told of the breach of etiquette I had committed an hour before. But I forgot to apologise for so doing. I disliked, moreover, to give my neuritis any importance, no matter how inconsiderate, not to say cruel, she might be in coming at the time when I would certainly spill a cup of coffee, were I to take it with my right hand. Once before, in Jeddah, I think, this pensioned arm of mine got me into trouble. The learned gentleman, who was amazed at my ignorance or impropriety was not going to pray that day until he had called my attention to it; but he listened with a profusion of sympathy to an address on neuritis and the impotency of modern medicine, apologized profoundly, and went away saying, 'I shall publish this in Jeddah: thou shalt not be misunderstood, *inshallah*, and misjudged.' My critic of Maharraq was as zealous, I think, in the cause of truth and as energetic in its dissemination. My reputation was retrieved; for an invitation came the following day from the distinguished citizens of that town, who insisted that the Literary Club which they had recently organized could not hope to rise to immortality, or at least bloom in the mortal garden of success, if I did not honour it with my distinguished presence and nourish it with my more distinguished wisdom. I accepted the invitation, and that Literary Club continues to flourish.

SHEIKH ABDULLAH IBN 'ISA AAAL KHALIFAH AND HIS SON SHEIKH MUHAMMAD.

This picture was taken during their sojourn in England.

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To go back to the *majlis* of the venerable Sheikh 'Isa, where, in a brief audience of five minutes, I made two grievous mistakes. I have dwelled, unduly perhaps, on the first, because it reveals an important social trait; and for the same reason, although self-incriminating, I must dwell on the second. Should I not know, after a year of travel in Arabia, that a ruler never discusses political questions before his people? I should. But in the midst of an otherwise august assembly of do-nothing Arabs, sitting with their chief to augment the dignity of his state in audience, I was rash enough to open the subject of a convention of Arab rulers at Mecca. I do not make a scapegoat of my neuritis, but I do think that the first mistake, produced by a spell of pain, led on to the second. No sooner had I mentioned Mecca than His Royal Highness interrupted, saying, 'We shall talk about that elsewhere.'

But suddenly, fearing lest I should open another door of the darkness of indiscretion, he rose from his seat and walked out. I followed with two of his royal cousins, feeling like a criminal led to jail. The august assembly rose and squatted again as we passed out of the gate. The Grand Old Sheikh walked at a rapid pace, in a sullen mood, through a tangle of byways, to another house; and after entering, crossing the hall, passing through several rooms, and going up a flight of stairs to the second floor, he led me into a private reception room, and sitting down on the left side of the cushion of honour, he motioned me to the right. He then gave me a lecture on the fundamental principles of diplomacy.

'These people,' he said, meaning the august assembly, 'are either donkeys or barbarians. They are *awbash*'—what we might say riff-raff—'and they know nothing, nor should they know anything, about public affairs. We never discuss political matters before them,' etc., etc. I apologized for my indiscretion, and we discussed literature, poetry, pearls, and the population of the islands of

Bahrain. He did not, that day, after pronouncing that lecture, broach the subject that led him to take me to his private house. The old Arab did not, after all, forgive me. He took me out of the assembly in self-defence, and he gave me, in private, the cudgelling I richly deserved.

CHAPTER II

THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION

It is the opinion of ancient historians that the cradle of civilization, even of the human race, is the Persian Gulf; that the inhabitants of its islands were the first to launch a sail upon the water and to brave the dangers of long voyages between the East and the West; and that the Phoenicians, who are mentioned in the ancient Egyptian chronicles by their original name, the Pount, first set out from this part of the world on their trading expeditions.

George Rawlinson, basing his opinion upon Herodotus and Strabo, says that 'the earliest of Asiatic monarchies sprang up in the alluvial plain at the head of the Persian Gulf;' and archeologists have agreed, it seems, that Qornah at the confluence of the Euphrates and the Tigris, was the happy abode of our first parents. There is a tree to confirm the tradition; it is called the tree of good and evil, and it continues to bear the traditional fruit. Qornah is by no means a paradisaical spot.

But the historian and the archaeologist agree with the Prophets: at the head of the Persian Gulf was the Garden of Eden; around the Gulf sprang up the earliest monarchies of the world; and from these parts first emigrated eastward the people who now occupy that vast country called China. The Phoenicians, too, the first navigators of the world, first set out from the Gulf and started to trade between India and Syria and Egypt. Colonies were afterwards established along the Syrian coast, and thence they navigated the Mediterranean and

were 'the carriers between the East and the West—the link that bound them together—in times anterior to the first appearance of the Greek navigators.' They opened a land route across the Syrian desert to the Gulf, and they returned from India and Ceylon, sailing through the Red Sea and bringing with them also the gold of Ophir.[1]

But there are ruins in the island of Bahrain that corroborate the testimony of Herodotus and Strabo about the Arab origin of the Phoenicians. We rode out of Manamah one afternoon, in a southerly direction, passing through palm gardens, along copious streams of water; and after a drive of several miles through a field of stubble, we reached the village of Qiryat Ali, and beyond it was a vast plain dotted with little mounds, what seemed like a city in ruins. It is the city of the dead; the mounds, which are pyramidal in form, and of different sizes, are the tombs of the ancient inhabitants of the island. There are several cemeteries, for different classes of people, it seems, each one separate from the other. But there are no inscriptions, no glyphs or hieroglyphs inside or outside these tombs; the Phoenicians, it seems, had not yet invented their alphabet.

We walked up to the top of one of the large mounds, about 50 feet high, and turning down the other side, we came upon the traces of construction—a doorway with broken sides and a fallen lintel, which had become a sill. The interior is composed of two rooms, one above the other, built of dressed stones of a rather large size. The dead were buried in them either standing or in a sitting posture. These large mounds, which range from thirty to fifty feet high, and in which the compartments are of uniform structure, were the tombs of the nobility of the island. The cemeteries beyond them, extending several miles in the direction of Ar-Rifa', contain from five to six thousand tombs ranging from five to ten feet high. It is surprising

[1] Historians are not agreed upon the location of Ophir. Some think it is in South Africa, others say that it is on the Indian coast opposite Oman.

that archaeology, in its post-bellum excavation-fever, has not reached Bahrain, where there are such possibilities for the increase of the world's store of knowledge. But Bahrain is out of the trodden path of tourists.

Nevertheless, an Englishman, Captain Durand, came to the island in 1879 and was the first to open and examine one of these tombs. What he found in it, besides human bones, were potsherds, objects of ivory, pieces of decayed curtains, bits of worm-eaten wood, and bones of horses. No inscriptions, no glyphs or hieroglyphs. Ten years later, another English traveller, Theodore Bent, went farther than his predecessor in his excavations, and he found certain objects of industry, which the authorities of the British Museum pronounced to be Phoenician. Thus is confirmed the testimony of ancient history, which also implies that these tombs are the most ancient perhaps in the world, because the emigration of the Phoenicians north-west to the Mediterranean coast, was, according to Rawlinson, about five thousand years ago.

Another testimony of history to the Arab origin of the Phoenicians is that furnished by one of the generals of Alexander the Macedonian, who was sent to the Gulf to discover the route to India. He writes that he had visited a Phoenician town on the western coast of the Gulf and an island called Nirin (the present Dareen), which is not far from the coast town of Jubail (Biblus). More remarkable is the fact that another town on the coast of Oman bears the name of the famous Tyre (Sour) of the Mediterranean. The present Sour of Arabia, like its ancient namesake of Syria, is a marine port, and most of its ten thousand inhabitants are navigators or live by navigation. They have more than a hundred dhows which ply between Basrah and Bombay and Port Said. This Sour was in ancient times a trading station between India and Babylonia.

If, however, the contention that they first emigrated from the Gulf to the Syrian coast is open to question, and

that the contrary is the fact, we cannot doubt one of two things, namely, that either the Phoenicians, who are Semites, are descendants of the Arabs, or the Arabs are descendants of the Phoenicians. The first is true, if Rawlinson is right; the second is more likely the fact, if we are to depend wholly upon the words of the Macedonian general. And if both testimonies are incontrovertible, then this island on the Persian Gulf is both the cradle and the last resting-place of the Phoenician race.

In our days, and from our present point of view, it is immaterial whether the Arabs are the root or the branch. What really interests us is the fact that between the two people, the Phoenicians and the Arabs, are certain observable characteristics, foremost among which, especially along the coasts of the Gulf and the Red Sea, are the skill and the bravery of the navigator, as well as the passion for trade.

CHAPTER III

IN THE SHADOW OF THE SAIL

THE Arabs of the Gulf and the Red Sea, who, like the Phoenicians, are masters of the sail and lovers of the watery vast, have discovered an object of trade, more precious—and more profitable perhaps—than the murex. They did not content themselves with what was brought to the beach by the washing waves ; they dived into the depths and found the pearl.

I know a little of the natural history of the pearl ; but who first discovered it, and traded in it, or deceived a woman with it, and who of the fair first wore it, I know not. There may be something in the pages of history about the first man that opened an oyster and found the precious thing therein ; there may be much in the pages of archaeology about the first jeweller that set it into a ring or a necklace ; there is a great deal in the pages of romance about the nets that were woven by it around a dancer's feet or a princess's heart : but these are not the only things in the vast store of my ignorance. I know, however, that while much of our prose and poetry glitters with the gold of Ophir, there is little or nothing in them about the pearl of the Persian Gulf, the precious pearl of Bahrain and Dareen.

Especially of Bahrain, which is considered the purest and most perfect in the world. The pearl-fisheries around this island are also the most extensive, yielding from twenty to thirty million rupees' worth (seven to ten million dollars) a year. Kuwait produces about five million

rupees' worth ; Qatif three million ; Jubail half a million ; while the pearl fisheries along the coast of Oman yield about half as much as those of Bahrain. Most of the pearls of the Gulf are on the Arabian side, and their beds extend from Abu Dhubai near the Oman coast up to Ras'ul-Mish'ab near Kuwait.

Let me, while on this subject, tell the story of this rare and precious thing—the pearl ; and what I here set down is not from the pages of poesy and romance, but from a pearl-fisher's book of knowledge and experience. The pearl is the daughter of the oyster, whose house is the shell, which would have remained at the bottom of the sea, sticking to the soil or the rock, were it not for the predatory hand of man. The Arabs of the Red Sea divide this bivalve into large and small, the *balbil* and the *sadaf*. Pearls are found in the latter, and rarely in the former. The shells of the *balbil* are sold for export, those of the *sadaf* are thrown away. But the pearl-fisheries of the Red Sea do not yield more than a million rupees' worth a year.

Briefly, this is the story of the pearl-oyster. During the early days of the spawning season, the bed of the sea is yellowish with the ova, which are first as small as poppy seeds ; and when they become the size of lentils, they begin to develop hairy-like growths, the cilia, which are of a bright greenish colour, two or three inches long, and as strong as twine. During this period, the ova float in the water below, and are subject to the motion of the current ; but when the cilia are fully developed, they find their clutch, a rock or something else solid to clutch at, and begin to grow into shells. With the ciliated gills and labial palps they gather food, which consists of minute aquatic organisms and mud. Some Arabic authors tell us that pearl-oysters come up to the surface on rainy days for a drink of fresh water. This is not possible ; for during the period of growth they stick to the clutch, and after that period they become too heavy to mount to the surface.

But the pearl ? The pearl, I have said, is the daughter

of the oyster. The bare fact, however—the cold and disenchanting truth—is that the pearl is the daughter of an ill to which the oyster is subject; it is the result of a derangement in the process of secretion. For in gathering food not too wisely, a grain of sand or an inedible parasite is taken into the system, where it remains, because it is indigestible, and forms the basis of the pearl; it irritates the mantle of the mollusc, inducing an abundance of calcareous secretion, much of which is deposited around it, drawn to it; and thus the foreign substance develops a life of its own, which is distinguished for its hardness, as well as its warmth and lustre, and which is called the pearl. If the calcareous concretion is near the shell, it is not a good pearl; if it is within the mollusc, it is a rare gem.

But Al-Qazwini, the author of *The Wonders of Creation*, tells a different story about the birth of the pearl. 'In spring,' he says, 'the wind that blows from the north carries from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf a mist, which contains a viscid substance similar to mercury; and when the mist falls where there are pearl-oysters, the mollusc draws this substance to it and is impregnated by it. A big drop gives birth to a big pearl; and out of a sprinkling the seed-pearls are born.' Al-Qazwini is considered an authority on the wonders of the universe, and we shall meet him again, even in a wilder flight of the imagination.[1]

Having told you how the pearl is born, I shall now tell you how it is fished. The diving season on the Gulf begins when Taurus appears on the horizon and ends with the appearance of Libra. This means that the season lasts from May till September. An-Nabhani, who, like every

[1] Another remarkable theory of Al-Qazwini's: 'The oyster comes up to the surface at sunrise and sunset, but not during midday, because the heat of the sun has a bad effect upon the pearl in the making'—as if the oyster were conscious of its work. 'She opens her mouth to receive the drops of mist, which are formed by the aid of the sunlight into a pearl, as an embryo is formed in the womb. And when this is done, the oyster returns to some solid spot to which she adheres.' The reverse of which is the truth; that is, she sticks to her clutch during the period of development.

Arab, goes back to the zodiac for his calendar, has written a history of Bahrain, and was himself a pearl-fisher. He also wrote about pearl-fishing, because Ibn Batoutah's description of it is not, as he says, altogether exact. He has nothing against the famous Arab traveller, nor have I. But what I have heard in Bahrain confirms what An-Nabhani has written in his little book.

The sail-boats that are used are the *jalbout*, the *sanbouk* and the *baggalah*, the last being the largest and the first the smallest. But before the fleets go out in the latter part of May, independent fishers begin in March to dive along the coast in a depth of from five to ten feet; and some of them venture out on an expedition of a week or two, returning before the beginning of the season. These people go out on their own hook, but later they may join the regular crafts on a basis of hire.

Every boat is under the captaincy of a *nakhouzah*, is manned with a crew of divers and their assistants, as well as some apprentices, and is provisioned, as a rule, for a month. The localities of the pearl-oyster are known, and most of them are within a distance of thirty miles from the coast. The depths vary from ten to fifty feet.

It is a day of jubilation when the pearl-fishing fleet unfolds its sails and sets out, in a balmy spring breeze, under the pious chanting of its crew, seeking the treasures of the deep. The poor diver, who had already survived many dangers and whose diseased lungs may not last him another plunge, who may drop dead below, holding in his hand the shell that contains the priceless pearl, nevertheless sings mellifluously, to the rhythmic play of the oars. *Off! And we depend on Allah.*

Behold them above the precious bed. The sails are folded, the anchors are cast, and the divers are getting ready. Each one attaches the iron weight—this may also be a stone—to his foot; ties the basket of palm fibre around his neck; places the air-stopper, which is like a clothes-pin, upon his nose; and having taken a last

breath, he covers his face with his hands, which are sometimes protected with gloves, and plunges into the depth. To the iron weight and the basket are attached two ropes, which are held by the diver's assistant, who remains in the boat. As soon as the diver reaches bottom, he opens his eyes and releases the weight, which is lifted by the assistant. He then begins to pick the oysters and place them in the basket, whose rope is held between his toes. So, when it is filled, or when he no longer can hold his breath, he jerks his foot, and the assistant straightway pulls him up, crying *nabar* [1] (he's out) ! Coming to the surface, he takes the air-stopper off, gives the basket to the assistant, who empties it in the hold, and after a little rest he plunges again. The time a diver stays under water is not less than one minute and not more than five. At the end of the day, they all sit down to open the oysters under the superintendence of the *nakhouzah,* in whose keeping the pearls are placed.

If the *nakhouzah* is fishing on his own account, he sells the pearls and takes one-fifth of the proceeds. The other four-fifths are divided among his men as follows : the diver gets one-half (of the four-fifths), his first assistant gets two-thirds of the other half, and the second assistant gets the other third, from which is deducted the price of their food. The apprentice gets nothing but his food and the experience.

If, on the other hand, the *nakhouzah* is undertaking an expedition for one of the merchants, who is as a rule the owner of the craft and the Shylock of the divers, the proceeds are divided as follows : Shylock gets one-fifth for financing the expedition, half of one-fifth for the leasing of the boat, and the other half as interest on the money invested ; while the *nakhouzah* and the crew get the other three-fifths, which are divided among them on the basis above mentioned.

There are also a few who lease the boats, paying one-half of one-fifth of the proceeds for same, and go out on

[1] Literally, he lifted his voice—he gave the sign to be lifted up.

their own account. But the former method, in which the merchant gets two-fifths, extras in oppression excepted, is the most common. There is also a class of merchants called *tawawish*, who go out to the fishing places and buy from the *nakhouzahs* direct, paying them in money or in dates and other food. The latter is often preferred because it saves the crew the trouble of going back to the city when their stock of provision is exhausted.

It is neither a tonic nor a gold mine, this diving for pearls. On the contrary, almost every diver suffers from a disease of the lungs and is always in debt. But the rupture of blood-vessels, resulting from the heavy and frequent pressure upon the respiratory organs, and the obsessions of disease and debt, are not their only worries. What the diver dreads most is the *dawl*. What is the *dawl*? Ad-Damiri is the greatest Arab authority upon animal life; but he tells us nothing about the *dawl*. Al-Qazwini, whom I have already mentioned, has even helped in the creation of many of the wonders of the universe; [1] but the *dawl* seems to have escaped him. Ibn Batoutah did not meet with him in all his travels by land and sea. I have to have recourse, therefore, to a modern authority, to An-Nabhani himself, who has seen the *dawl* with his own eyes.

> 'The *dawl*,' he says, 'is a semi-fluid animal, about the size of a man's hand, round in shape, with a multitude of tendons about two feet in length, resembling a network of silk. It has no power of locomotion, but is driven by the waves and currents hither and thither. If it comes in contact with the body of man, it burns it, leaving a deep scar; and if it is lifted out of the water and left in the sun for five minutes, it dissolves.[2]

It has been stated that the pearls of Bahrain are the purest and most perfect in the world; and the reason for

[1] 'In Al-Yaman,' he writes, 'is a river which flows from east to west at sunrise, and from west to east at sunset.' Even more marvellous is Mt. Hermuz in Tabaristan, in which is a stream that flows and stops flowing at the will of man. 'If a man utters a cry, it stops; and when he utters a second cry, it flows again.'—*The Wonders of Creation*, vol. i. p. 279.

[2] *History of Bahrain*, by Sheikh Khalifah ibn Muhammad an-Nabhani.

this is one of the marvels of natural phenomena in this island. Both are therefore deserving of notice. Authorities on the pearl agree that fresh water improves it, adds to its purity ; and I have quoted Al-Qazwini to show that Arab authors realized this, but could not explain it. If it were true that the oyster comes up to the surface on rainy days for a drink of fresh water, the pearls of Ceylon, where the rainfall is more frequent and copious than it is in the Gulf, should therefore surpass in purity and beauty the pearls of Bahrain. But this has escaped Al-Qazwini, who has quoted the Bahranis in what is only half the truth. ' The pearl-oyster,' he says, ' is found only where streams of fresh water flow into the sea.' The whole truth is that *the best pearls* are found only where streams, etc.

Fresh water, therefore, improves the pearl ; but the rain loses that quality as soon as it falls upon the sea, and there are no rivers in Bahrain. This brings us to the natural phenomenon I have referred to, and that is the fresh-water springs under the water of the Gulf. Those that are known are about twenty-five, some of which are many miles out, twenty at the most, and at a depth of from ten to twenty feet. Others are so near the coast that they are visible at the ebbing tide, and they furnish excellent drinking water to the neighbouring inhabitants. But the Bahranis even go out with their water-skins to fill them at the submarine fountains. They dive for fresh water as they do for pearls, holding the mouth of the skin over the gushing spring until it fills. Here is the source from which the pearl-oyster also gets its sweet draughts, the source that adds a warmth and lustre to its pearl.

Noteworthy, too, is the origin of these springs, which also flow at Qatif and Al-Hasa, and which geographers have traced more than three hundred miles inland, up to the plateau of Najd. Ar-Riyadh is 1,800 feet above the sea, and the hard limestone ridges of Al-'Ared and Twaiq, which are higher than Ar-Riyadh, send their rain-water, mostly in subterranean channels, down to Wadi Hanifah,

and under the Dahna and the Summan, back to the Gulf. Says D. G. Hogarth in his book, *The Penetration of Arabia*, page 342 :

> ' Doubtless also a certain part of these waters, obeying the main slope of the plateau, percolate under the barring ridges, to reappear through the gravels near the coast, and make the rich oasis of Hasa and Katif and the under-sea springs of Bahrain.'

There is plenty of underground water in Bahrain, and with more artesian wells and windmills the island can be made manifolds more productive of dates. But the natives have an idea that the palm-tree brings disease. There must be water, of course, where there are palms ; and often, from lack of care or drainage, the water gathers in ponds. Hence the swamps, the mosquitoes, the malaria. The drinking water, too, which does not come from the under-sea springs, is responsible for the miasmatic conditions that prevail. The people live in the summer on the fringes of the island, in handsomely built huts of palm ribs, near the fresh-water springs. But this water can be brought to their homes, if they were progressive, or if those who come from the land of progress, and who live among them, were more enterprising.

I wonder why my missionary friends, who get their drinking-water like the natives, in the most primitive manner, from the under-sea spring of Shuraibah, and who have come all the way from Jersey and Michigan to look after the health, as well as the soul, of the Arab, do not wake up to the opportunity of supplying the city of Manamah with the water that keeps itself, in a sea of salt, forever pure. It is so easy to pipe it out to the heathen inhabitants, and such an act of mercy too. Moreover, it can be made profitable. Why, again, do they not try to popularize the windmill—there were not more than four on the island, when I was there—and thus bring back to Bahrain the era of prosperity which it enjoyed in the past, when its source of wealth was not the pearl, but agriculture.

In the past, in pre-Islamic days, there were many wells on this island and an extensive irrigation system; but history tells us that the Omaiyad Khalif, Abd'ul-Malek ibn Mirwan, ordered that the wells be destroyed and stopped up, that the rich inhabitants, who had become too arrogant and rebellious, be reduced to poverty and submission. When we read of the Omaiyad Arabs of Andalusia and what they did there for agriculture, we incline to doubt; but when we realize how the Arab tribes make war upon each other and what wilful destruction is committed in retribution, we find it reasonable to believe the charge of history against Ibn Mirwan. Upon me and mine enemies! . . . Even to-day the colonial policy, whatever its other name might be, pursued by certain European powers, does not differ much in principle from that of the Omaiyad Fool of Damascus.

CHAPTER IV

BAHRAIN IN HISTORY

BETWEEN Maskat and Basrah there is not a more beautiful position, and a more suitable for war or for commerce, than that of Bahrain. It is set in the middle of the Persian Gulf, in a secure corner of it, suggesting a cruiser in the vast bay between Qatar and Qatif, or a steamer anchored near the golden coast of Al-Hasa, flying the flag of trade and peace. It is even worthy, being surrounded by pearl-beds, of a poetic image : it is a huge pearl in the pocket of the Gulf. No wonder it has attracted in the past, as it attracts to-day, the conquerors, the traders, and the colonizers of the world.

For this reason, too, it is one of the crowded spots of the world ; and were it not for its pearl industry and its commercial possibilities, its population would be reduced to one-half its present number. The comparison, in this respect, between it and the vast kingdom of Ibn Sa'oud for instance, is striking. There are 450 souls to a square mile in Bahrain, and only six in Najd. But most of the 400,000 square miles of central Arabia is sand desert and barren soil, while its population is mostly of the Bedu. A square mile is not too much, therefore, for a beduin family and its flock. On the other hand, a square mile in Bahrain, in spite of its fertile soil, could barely support one-tenth of its present quota, were it not for the pearl and the markets of Najd. It was even more crowded in the past ; but being subject to the anarchy and chaos that

SHEIKH HAMAD IBN 'ISA AAL KHALIFAH, RULER OF BAHRAIN, AND HIS SON.

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precede, and accompany, and follow a conqueror, or a change of dynasty, many of its big towns were destroyed and deserted.

It was a Persian colony before Al-Islam and during the first years of the Prophet; but its governor was always an Arab Ameer appointed by the Shah. Its population was composed of Parsis and Arabs, with a sprinkling of Christians and Jews. In the eighth year of the Hijrah (629 A.D.) the Prophet Muhammad sent one of his companions, Al-Hadhrami by name, to offer the people of Bahrain the alternative of either embracing Al-Islam or paying tribute. The Governor and his fellow Arabs, desirous of shaking off the yoke of the Persians, and attracted moreover by the new Paradise, did not hesitate to accept Al-Islam; the rest of the population refused, and Al-Hadhrami did not insist upon their salvation. But they had to pay a heavy tribute; the companion of the Prophet would not accept less than half their crops of dates and grain; and leaving them to perish in their heathenism, he returned to Al-Hijaz with his caravans of booty, the proof of his triumph.

But after the death of the Prophet, the Arabs of Bahrain reverted to paganism. 'If he were a Prophet,' they said, 'he would not have died.' Al-Hadhrami was therefore sent back to chastise them; but he met with difficulties on the way, which he overcame with prayers. He was evidently a miracle-worker; for when his punitive expedition was crossing an arid desert, the water having been exhausted, he prayed for rain, and soon a cloud, 'like the wing of a hawk, hovered above them and fell down in showers.' They filled their water-skins and proceeded to the coast; but there were no boats to cross to Bahrain. The apostates had burned them. Al-Hadhrami, therefore, 'performed two genuflections, invoking the assistance of the Almighty and Compassionate,' and he got on his horse and waded into the water. 'Follow me, in the name of Allah!' he cried; and his

army of four thousand followed. 'And they reached Bahrain, without wetting a foot or a hoof.'

After bringing the apostates back to the fold, Al-Hadhrami crossed to Zabarah in Qatar, carrying to its people the great boon. He was now a conqueror, but his terms were most liberal. The choice of one of, not two, but three things, he offered ; namely, Al-Islam, or tribute, or the sword. The people of Zabarah were shrewd enough to choose the way of least resistance and least cost—they became good Muslems and praised Allah. Al-Hadhrami then crossed the Gulf, carrying the Prophet's message to the heathens of Persia ; but he was busier there collecting tribute and putting the sword to its right use. He made a few converts, however, and returned with his booty to report to the Khalif Omar, who, in reward, appointed him Governor of Basrah. But the will of Allah was not that of his two pious slaves : he called Al-Hadhrami to him, while he was on his way, before he arrived at his post.

Bahrain accepted the rule of the orthodox Khalifs and continued to pay taxes to the Khalifs of Omaiyah at Damascus, until the reign of Abd'ul-Malek ibn Mirwan, he who ordered the wells of Bahrain to be destroyed to destroy its agricultural resources and thus reduce its people to poverty and submission. This submission was checkered with rebellions, conducted by native leaders, who adopted Ibn Mirwan's unique policy of domination. But the fruits of poverty do not keep.

The Abbaside Khalifs then established their authority in Bahrain and Al-Hasa ; but it suffered a check in 249 H. (863 A.D.) when a man in Basrah called Sahib'uz-Zinj (Leader of the Blacks) set himself up as a prophet and came to Bahrain to inaugurate his reign on earth. Bahrain is good soil for the seeds of all human desires ; it is a stepping-stone to power, to riches, to Paradise ! But it did not readily and wholly accept the Leader of the Blacks. There were disputes about him, which led to battles in the streets ; so, to avoid the unnecessary shedding of blood, he retired,

like a good prophet, to the desert. This disappearance strengthened his cause and added to his spiritual wealth. He received, while in the desert, several messages direct from heaven—upon his own testimony—and he began therefore to curse the orthodox Khalifs and Mother 'Aishah. Verily, prophecy begins with anathema.

He was called Sahib'uz-Zinj because he rallied the black slaves to his standard by giving them their freedom and promising them Paradise. He even gave them a foretaste of this Paradise in Basrah ; for all the women of the Muslem nobility, of the line of both Hasan and Husain, were seized and then sold for a bagatelle among his followers. He was the true Prophet. Arabs, as well as black slaves, flocked to his standard, which was planted along the coast from Basrah down to Oman, Bahrain included. The formula of Al-Hadhrami was reduced to two words : tribute or the sword. Paradise automatically followed the tribute, but the sword was often used as an auxiliary. For twenty years the Leader of the Blacks established his paradise on the coast of the Persian Gulf ; and when he was assassinated in 883 A.D., Baghdad fetched a sigh of relief.

Neither Baghdad nor Bahrain, however, was destined to enjoy a long period of peace ; for eight years after the assassination of the Basrah Prophet, came Abu Sa'id the Carmathian—the terror of the Carmathians !

Abu Sa'id was a disciple of Al-Qaddah, the Isma'ili, who had established in Al-Ahwaz a secret order to undermine the power of the Abbasides ; and he was at first a man of exemplary goodness and gentleness and piety. The insufferable tyranny of the Abbaside Khalifs also helped to swell the ranks of his followers. People fled to his standard. Besides, he made Al-Islam easy in practice, and more attractive therefore to the Bedu, by reducing the five daily prayers to two and abolishing the fast of Ramadhan. Soon he became a power, which the Khalif at Baghdad had to combat ; but in almost all the battles

the Abbaside forces were defeated. The Carmathians occupied Al-Hasa and Bahrain, penetrated into Arabia, and established themselves even in Al-Yaman.

But the apogee of glory and terror was attained when in the year 930 A.D. they entered Mecca in triumph, under their leader Abu Taher, and put thirty thousand pilgrims to the sword. Abu Taher went into the Grand Mosque riding on his horse, which staled before the Kaaba as he whistled to him ; and while his followers were throwing the heads of the slain into the well of Zamzam, he cried :

> 'Allah 's all ! But I am, *billah*, great :
> He creates, and I annihilate.'

After these unspeakable atrocities committed in the very shadow of the Kaaba, the power of the Carmathians began to wane, especially along the Gulf, where three Ameers, Ibn Ali'l-'Uyouni of Al-Hasa, Ibn 'Aiyash of Qatif and Abu Bahlul of Bahrain contested their authority and finally wrested it from them. But these rebels then fought among themselves for supreme power. Abu Bahlul held his own in Bahrain for several years and was then defeated by the Ameer of Qatif, who was ambitious to add also Al-Hasa to his dominions. But in the contest between him and its Ameer Al-'Uyouni, he lost both his gains and his capital. With the triumphs of the Ameer of Al-Hasa begins the dynasty of the 'Uyounis at Bahrain, which lasted two hundred and fifty years.

By this time there was an upheaval in Persia, following the abrogation of the Seljukian dynasty, and a renascence there of the spirit of heroism and conquest. It was inevitable that Bahrain and all the Hasa territory should come again under Persian rule ; and they continued thus for a little more than a hundred years, during which time the terror of the Moguls spread like a black cloud over the Middle and the Near East. The hordes of Genghis Khan sacked Bahrain in the first quarter of the thirteenth century and left it in blood and fire to the Persians.

A hundred years later, night gave birth to her second son Tamerlane, who resumed the work of terror and destruction that was started by his grandfather Genghiz. Tamerlane occupied Bahrain and held it during his lifetime; but after his death, the grip of the Moguls was relaxed, and the island fell into the hands of a people who came this time from the West. Adventurers they were, and traders, and conquerors; but they came to build, and not to destroy.

For while the Moguls in the East were sowing death and terror everywhere, sacking and burning cities, glorying in carnage and desolation; while that heavy black cloud hung over the Near East, shutting off the light of day and corrupting the very headsprings of life, the thinking mind of man was fledging out in Europe and beginning to soar over the horizons of knowledge and discovery. Navigation, which is the right hand of commerce, was the first to profit by these flights and to make the world a partner in her gains. It was indeed navigation that first hauled the flag of heroism and sacrifice in distant lands beyond the seas.

The day of the explorer had come; and of the noted heroes of the sea was the Portuguese navigator Vasco de Gama, who rounded the Cape, sailed the Indian Ocean, and was the first European to plant his nation's flag upon Indian soil. De Gama was followed by his fellow-countryman and contemporary Alfonso d'Albuquerque, who was the first to conquer Maskat; he then entered the Straits of Ormuz and proceeded up the Gulf, exploring its islands, and seeking a route to India that might connect with the Mediterranean.

The Portuguese occupied Bahrain and Qatif at the beginning of the sixteenth century and fortified them as they did the Straits of Ormuz. But they did not extend their sway to Al-Hasa, because the Turks had already established themselves there.

Even in those days the Persian Gulf was considered as

the key to the trade-route between the Orient and the Occident; and no Western nation that had a heritage in India could feel secure in her power unless she had this key in her hand. Portugal realized this. But the English, who came to India a hundred years after Vasco de Gama, succeeded in ousting the Portuguese, as they did afterwards the French. Abandoning India, they also had to abandon Bahrain, which they ruled for forty years.

The Turks themselves, whose interest, even in those days, was mysteriously involved with that of Great Britain, helped to put the Portuguese both out of India and Bahrain.[1] But they did not share in the spoils of victory. For the people of this island, who were mostly of the Shi'ah, petitioned, after the evacuation of the Portuguese, to the Shah of Persia for protection. The Shah heard their petition, and for the third time Bahrain became a Persian protectorate, governed by an Arab appointee, as in pre-Islamic days. Although this third occupation continued for more than two hundred years, the island was seldom free from disturbances, and the local Government was subject moreover to the corrupting influences that were undermining the Government at home. So much so was this, that when the last Governor, Nasr Aal Mazkour, who was engaged in a war with Aal Kahlifah of Zabarah (Qatar), asked for reinforcements, he did not get them. He therefore fled to Abu Shihr, after losing the last battle, which was fought in 1197 H. (1782 A.D.), and the Khalifahs entered Bahrain in triumph.

[1] Sulaiman, son of Sultan Salim, came down to Aden at the head of a fleet, in the year 1538, expelled the Portuguese, who had already obtained a foothold in it, and proceeded to India and then to Bahrain on the same mission.

LAUNCHING A JALBOOT, BAHRAIN.

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CHAPTER V

A CENTURY OF WARS

On the coast of Qatar, opposite Bahrain, is Zabarah, which was in the past one of the prominent cities of Eastern Arabia and the centre of the pearl industry of the Gulf. Its inhabitants were of Aal Ibn Ali and the Julahimah, who are a section of Benu 'Itbah, one of the clans of Jumailah ; and Jumailah is a sub-tribe of 'Aneza.[1] Now, Aal Khalifah, who are also of Benu 'Itbah, lived in Al-Aflaj, southern Najd ; and one of their sheikhs, Khalifah by name, moved with his people, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, to Kuwait, where he lived for many years. After his death his son Sheikh Muhammad moved to Zabarah, where he was welcomed by his cousins the Julahimah and Aal Ibn Ali.

Sheikh Muhammad ibn Khalifah came to Zabarah as a pearl merchant ; but he soon rose to the rank which the Arabs are quick to recognize. Being a man of piety and generosity and wisdom, he was chosen by the people as their ruling Ameer. His son Khalifah succeeded him when he died, but he had none of the qualities of his father. He was a pious man, however, and he went to Mecca on a pilgrimage the second year of his rule, leaving the Ameerate to his brother Ahmad, a man of ambition and courage. Sheikh Khalifah died in Mecca, and Sheikh Ahmad was the conqueror of Bahrain. It was he who in 1782 defeated Nasr Aal Mazkour, the last governor of the Persian regime, who fled to Abu Shihr.

[1] *See* Part III, chap. ii. p. 245.

But he did not live long to enjoy the fruits of his conquest; and when he died, at his capital in Qatar, he was succeeded by his son Silman, who was both weak-headed and weak-spirited. Besides, he was so unfortunate as to be the contemporary of the greatest Arab of his times. The first Abd'ul-Aziz ibn Sa'oud, Ameer of Najd and Imam of the Wahhabis, had already set out on a career of conquest and was then with his forces in Al-Hasa. The people of Zabarah, hearing of his next move, were quick to cross over, with their Ameer Sheikh Silman, to Bahrain.

But having fled from the Wahhabi conqueror, they soon found themselves before another, who had come by sea. For the ruler of Maskat, Saiyed Sultan, having heard that things were awry in Bahrain, came to straighten them with his sword. He also had a fleet of sails, which awed the Bahranis and Sheikh Silman. What followed cannot be described as peace, for there was no fight. Sheikh Silman, after surrendering his brother as a hostage, went back with his people to Qatar, and Saiyed Sultan, after appointing his son Sa'id as Ameer of Bahrain, sailed away in triumph.

But the Benu 'Itbahs still cherished the hope of retaking Bahrain; and when the hostage brother of Silman died in Maskat, they raised the flag of war and appealed to the Ameer of Najd for help. The Ameer Abd'ul-Aziz, consistent in the pursuit of his purpose, was only too willing. He sent them one of his able generals, Ibrahim ibn 'Faisan, at the head of an army, which joined them at Zabarah; and the two forces crossed to Bahrain and expelled from it Ameer Sai'd, son of Saiyed Sultan of Maskat.

It was now Ibn 'Faisan who spoke: these Bahranis are infidels, and the best cure for infidelity is Wahhabism. . . . We are here in the name of Allah and the Prophet, and here we shall remain. . . . As for the Benu 'Itbahs, they were permitted to go back to Zabarah. It was dangerous for them to remain in Bahrain while its infidel population was being Wahhabized. Again, crestfallen,

they returned to their native city; but they appealed to the Ameer of Najd at Dir'iyah for redress. Punish Ibn 'Faisan or let us, at least, return to Bahrain. The Ameer was not long in responding; but instead of complying with one of their two wishes, he ordered a force to move on Zabarah, occupy it, and send the Khalifahs to him at the capital. His order was carried out to the letter; and three of the Khalifahs, including Sheikh Silman, were taken prisoners (1224 H=1809 A.D.) to Dir'iyah.

Not only the Khalifahs, but the Arabs in general, adopt this policy; for they believe that a man between two enemies ought to be wise enough to use one of them against the other. They seldom go beyond that, however; or they seldom profit by their mistakes or those of their neighbours. The Khalifahs, although they paid dearly every time for the assistance invoked, never ceased to appeal to the Ameer of Najd, when they were worried by the Ameer of Maskat, or to the Ameer of Maskat, when they were threatened by the Ameer of Najd.

So they went back to Saiyed Sa'id, to him whom they had expelled from Bahrain, and asked him to help them expel Ibrahim ibn 'Faisan. Saiyed Sa'id gave them money only, and with this they were able to recruit and arm a force sufficient to give Ibn 'Faisan battle and finally put him out of Bahrain. Khalifah, son of Sheikh Silman, was one of the heroes of this war; and when a messenger came from the Ameer of Najd with an order to reinstate Ibn 'Faisan, he said to him: 'Go back and tell the Ameer that we have forgotten our relatives (the hostages), and if our sails could carry us to Dir'iyah, we would raze it to the ground.'

Not long after that, however, Dir'iyah was destroyed by Ibrahim Pasha in his war against the Wahhabis (1224 H. =1818 A.D.) and the Khalifahs that were held prisoners escaped and returned to Bahrain. Their occupation of the island seemed now permanent and secure; for the Ameer of Najd had enough to do fighting the Egyptians.

But there was another enemy in Zabarah itself, and of the Julahimah, a man by the name of Arhamah, who would not submit to the rule of the Khalifahs. Arhamah was implacable; and when Ibn 'Faisan was defeated and forced out of Bahrain, he welcomed him at Zabarah and offered to join forces with him. The two formed an alliance, organized an army, got together a fleet of sails, and were about to invade Bahrain; but the Khalifahs were quicker in getting with their fleet to Qatar.

It was night when they anchored opposite a place called Khuwair, where Arhamah and Ibn 'Faisan were waiting for an opportunity to launch an attack. Now, Arhamah was an experienced seaman, daring and brave; but when he saw the lights of the enemy's vessels he hesitated. 'These manoeuvres, O Ibrahim, are those of Abdullah ibn Ahmad.' 'Sheikh Abdullah,' said Ibn 'Faisan, with sarcasm, 'he is a prisoner at Dir'iyah.'

'They are the manoeuvres of an able leader,' insisted Arhamah, 'and he cannot be but Sheikh Abdullah.' He then ordered one of his men to get into a boat and row out to a point behind the enemy's fleet, and then light his lamp. But when the Bahrani commander saw the light, he feared lest it should be that of Arhamah's fleet, and he ordered his own to move around and beyond it. He would not be caught between the enemy and the coast. Arhamah was then certain that Sheikh Abdullah was there.

'I do not like that move, O Ibrahim; let us to sea.'

At dawn, being in sight of each other, Arhamah saw that his forces were not then sufficient to give battle; and he would have had the courage to withdraw, had he not been taunted by Ibn 'Faisan. He became reckless. Hoist the sails, and advance.

The vessels came close to each other, the sails flapped and swayed, the wood squeaked and crunched, the masts collided, and the scene scintillated with the flash of steel. Arhamah's boat was rubbing against that of Rahsed ibn Abdullah, whose father hastened to blockade the way

behind him that he may not retreat.—Is Abdullah ibn Ahmad a prisoner in Dir'iyah, O Ibrahim, or is he there before thee?

The battle was ablaze. Rifles were fired, swords flashed through the smoke, heads fell into the water, the blood flowed from the sides of careening vessels, the wood and the canvas took fire, and there was a canopy of flame and smoke, through which shot a multitude of sparks, and under which were two armies engaged in slaughter and two fleets bent on destroying each other.—Dost thou want the proof, O Ibrahim? Behold it before thee.

Like lead, the dead fell into the water, and among them was young Rahsed, son of Sheikh Abdullah. It was now the father's turn; but the two vessels, his and Arhamah's, were enveloped in smoke, and soon the latter's deck was under water, and the waves were shrouding the dead bodies and washing the blood upon its stern.

The Julahimah chief and the Wahhabi general escaped upon a board.—Hast thou seen how the Benu 'Itbah fight, O Ibrahim?

But Arhamah was not silenced by defeat. Having failed in his partnership with Ibrahim ibn 'Faisan, he carried his cause to Saiyed Sa'id, then the ruler of Maskat.

'Aal Khalifah are thine enemies and mine, O Sa'id. They beat thee once, and they beat me. But thou art not of those who accept defeat with humility, O Sa'id. Nay, *billah*.'

And Arhamah swore by the might of 'Itbah, and Sa'id swore by the head of his father. Depend upon Allah! Bahrain is ours, *inshallah*!

Saiyed Sa'id's first act of hostility was to seize and imprison a party of pearl merchants from Bahrain, who had stopped at Maskat, on their way to India. He then wrote to the people of Bahrain, asserting his former authority and insisting upon obedience and taxation. Sheikh Silman sent an evasive reply. By this time Saiyed Sa'id was ready with his fleet, which was commanded by

Arhamah and himself. They weighed anchor near the little island of Sitrah on the east coast, where they gave the Bahranis battle and were ultimately defeated by them. Saiyed Sa'id sailed back to Maskat, and Arhamah decided to join with no one against the Khalifahs after that. He would fight them alone.

But when Sheikh Silman was succeeded by his brother Sheikh Abdullah, Arhamah was old and blind. He would not, however, capitulate. He was defeated once by Sheikh Abdullah, and he would either get even with him or die fighting him. They met in the harbour of Qatif, and Arhamah's few vessels were no match for Abdullah's fleet. Nevertheless, he asked for an open sea; and seated on deck of his famous Gatroushah, with his son, a boy in the first of his teens, near him, and his slave Tarrar at the helm, he directed the battle. Who is near us now? His slave or his boy would answer. He is not our equal. And who is this? . . . He is not to be feared. But when the vessel of Ahmad ibn Silman was close to the Gatroushah, he gave orders to use lead and steel. Here is a foe to be reckoned with. His side has never touched the soft of skin (that is, he was not married).

The two vessels started firing, and Arhamah was fighting with his heart, arousing his men, inquiring of the progress of the battle, and giving orders.

'Where are they now, my boy?'

'On both sides.'

'Ahead, and to the right. . . . Now, where are they?'

'They are on the stern.'

Arhamah was silent; and his last act was to take his son to his bosom and throw a lighted stick into the powder magazine under him. The din of battle was swallowed up in the explosion, and the Gatroushah was in smithereens on every wave.

Arhamah had another son, who sought, with the help of Saiyed Sa'id of Maskat, to avenge his father. But they were defeated by Sheikh Abdullah, who now cherished the

ambition of becoming the conqueror of Al-Hasa. When he occupied Qatif, however, the Ameer of Najd sent an army to force him out of it. But the intrigues in his own house were more responsible for his subsequent downfall. In the ruling families of Arabia, of all Islam, in fact, these intrigues are the fruits of polygamy; especially so, when the wives of an Ameer are of different tribes; for their children are bound to be enemies and rivals for power.[1]

One of the wives of Sheikh Abdullah was of Aal Ibn Ali, the Arabs that occupied Zabarah when the first Khalifah came to it from Kuwait; and her three children plotted against their father and sought to wrest the reins of power from his hand. Sheikh Abdullah commissioned Sheikh Muhammad ibn Khalifah, grandson of his brother Sheikh Silman, to head an expedition against the children. The expedition was successful, and the children were brought back repentant to the paternal fold. But this was not the end of the tragedy. For Sheikh Muhammad, a few years later, rose against his uncle to maintain the line of succession, and several battles were fought, in which he was defeated.

Leaving his brother Sheikh Ali in Bahrain to carry on the plotting, he went to Najd to enlist the support of its Ameer. But having failed there, he returned to Qatar, wherefrom he sent some of his men to the island of Qais to arouse its Persian inhabitants against their former enemies in Bahrain. The Qais mission was successful; and soon the two brothers Muhammad and Ali were able to strike simultaneously at their uncle Sheikh Abdullah. They besieged him in the citadel; but he succeeded in escaping and fleeing Bahrain. He went to Kuwait in the hope of getting its Ameer to embrace his cause, but the

[1] 'The polygamy of the monarch swells to excessive numbers the hangers-on of the court, necessitates the building of a vast palace, encourages effeminacy and luxury, causes the annual outlay of enormous sums on the maintenance of the royal household, and introduces a degraded and unnatural class of human beings into positions of trust and dignity.'—George Rawlinson, *Ancient History*, p. 27.

Ameer refused. He went to Najd, and he returned as he went. Finally, he repaired to Maskat, where, a few days after his arrival, he was taken ill, and soon after he died in his disappointments and sorrows.

Sheikh Abdullah ruled Bahrain twenty-two years, during which time he was mostly engaged in making wars and repressing rebellions. He was succeeded by the son of his nephew, the victorious Sheikh Muhammad, who was the cause of splitting the Khalifah house into two branches, the Aal Abdullah and the Aal Silman.

Sheikh Muhammad ibn Khalifah Aal Silman was in war a lion and in politics a chameleon. He changed his colour at will to suit his surroundings. He was also a man of visions and an interpreter of dreams. But in this latter capacity he was not able to help himself. It was the chameleon in him, however, that surprised, entertained, and turned to profit the Governments of three nations. Turkey was enfolding Kuwait and Al-Hasa and Bahrain with motherly love; Persia still cherished the hope of bringing her wayward child back to the bosom of authority; and England, after getting a foothold at Abu Shihr, was threading her way, through the straits of two Oriental nations, to her goal. Wonder not at Sheikh Muhammad, if, to save himself, he resorted to acrobatics. He always had two flags flying from the citadel, the Ottoman flag from the western tower, and from the eastern tower, the flag of Iran. But this double policy neither surprised nor troubled the English.

Sheikh Muhammad came into power in 1842, and he ruled for six years without being disturbed by his enemies. But they were getting ready, especially the children of the unfortunate Sheikh Abdullah, who gathered under their standards an army of Aal ibn Ali, and declared war against their cousin. A battle was fought, and this page of history is a repetition of the many preceding pages. —O son of my father, we need another ally. Let us to Ibn Sa'oud.

The Ameer of Najd was at that time the noted Faisal who was fighting to resuscitate the kindgom of his ancestors. He turned, therefore, a sympathetic ear to the children of Sheikh Abdullah ; but his Hasa expedition was of no avail. Sheikh Muhammad defeated again his cousins in a naval battle, and his brother Ali pursued them to Ad-Damam, on the Hasa coast, where he besieged them for eleven months and made them sue for peace. The Ameer Faisal ibn Sa'oud, who came to make war, became the peacemaker, and the rebellious children were permitted to return to Bahrain.

But all's not yet well with Sheikh Muhammad ; for soon after the rebellion of his cousins was suppressed, the people of Qatar, which then belonged to Bahrain, rose up in arms against him. His brother Ali was therefore sent on a punitive expedition, and he was ruthless. He entered Dowhah the capital by night, set it on fire, and put most of its inhabitants to the sword. And when the leader of the rebellion, Sheikh Qasem ibn Thani, came to Bahrain to appeal for pardon, he was clapped into jail.

This stirred up all the tribes of Qatar and relighted the fire of rebellion. Many thousands, fully armed, set out in boats to invade Bahrain ; but Sheikh Muhammad and his brother Ali, at the head of a big fleet, met them near a place called Damisah, where one of the greatest naval battles in the history of the island was fought. Enemy vessels were fastened together with hooks ; people fought with swords, as well as rifles ; boats and canvas were ablaze ; the sky was red with flame, and the sea was red with blood. This is the battle of Damisah (1284 H. = 1867 A.D.) which was disastrous to Qatar, and which marks the beginning of British authority in Bahrain.

CHAPTER VI

THE ENGLISH AND PEACE

SECURITY and peace, England has brought to the Arabs of the Gulf. This, no one doubts. The fruits of security and peace, in navigation and trade, the Arabs now enjoy with little or no discrimination. This, too, is beyond doubt. But what is it costing the Arabs? The Gulf should be renamed: it is neither Persian nor Arabian: it is British. The direct route to India must be under absolute British control; and the key to this route to India shall remain in British hands. The Arabs of the Gulf have pledged themselves to this; they will not enter into treaty relations with any other Power. But was the Government of Great Britain satisfied with these concessions? A brief account of her political adventure in Bahrain will answer this question.

Bahrain had a large fleet of war vessels, which was used for conquest; by means of it a semblance of authority was established in Qatar and Qatif; and the ambition of the conqueror cast its eye down the coast of Oman. The English, then established at Abu Shihr, were watching with anxiety the Arabian horizon of the Gulf. The fleet of Bahrain troubled the atmosphere of peace. It also threatened the freedom of navigation.

The Political Agent at Abu-Shihr boards his warship, therefore, and comes to Bahrain to pay a friendly visit to its Ameer, then Sheikh Muhammad ibn Khalifah. The protest followed. The Bahrain fleet is threatening the peace and security of the Gulf—threatening the freedom

of navigation and trade. But we must defend our island. Your fleet is not big enough for that—it is but disturbing the peace—only the British fleet can give you the protection you need, etc. And the outcome of that protest and proposal, so deftly made, was an agreement between the British Government and the Bahrain Ameer, in which the former promised its protection against all outside attacks upon the island, and the latter promised to destroy the greater part of the fleet and to use the remaining vessels only for trade. That the soft words of the British Agent were reinforced with an ultimatum is most likely. The Bahrani notables assert that the English threatened to destroy the Arab fleet, if it ventured on the open sea.

On the other hand, the Government of Bahrain did not evidently burn its fleet; for the agreement was made before the last Qatar rebellion, which precipitated the battle of Damisah, and in which the fleet was used. Now, as soon as the news of this battle reached Abu Shihr, two warships were under full steam on the way to Bahrain. Sheikh Muhammad's excuse for using the fleet was that the enemy was at the door, and there was no time to wait for the armed vessels of the protecting Power.

But he did not remain at his capital to make this excuse himself to the British Agent; for when he learned that he was coming, he went on a hunting expedition, leaving his brother Ali in charge of affairs. This in itself was an evidence of guilt. The agreement was deliberately violated, and Bahrain should pay an indemnity of a hundred thousand rupees. The warships were ordered to fire at the citadel, from the towers of which once flew the Persian and the Turkish flags, and the indemnity was paid. Sheikh Ali was then made Ameer to succeed his brother Sheikh Muhammad.

This divided the ruling house; and, instead of making for peace, it precipitated a war between the two brothers, who for twenty years had worked together in perfect accord. British diplomacy supported its favourite Sheikh

Ali, who nevertheless lost everything. He was slain in battle, and his brother Sheikh Muhammad came back to power. But the plotting against him continued; and after he was seized by his enemy cousins and imprisoned in the citadel, the British warships paid another visit to Bahrain, and the British Political Agent was the arbiter and dictator. After the warships had fired at the citadel again, many of the followers of both factions were expelled from the island; both Sheikh Muhammad and his rival cousin were exiled; and the leaders of the community, with the help of the honourable Agent, chose as their ruler Sheikh 'Isa ibn Ali of the house of Silman Aal Khalifah. He came into power in 1870, and with him begins the era of peace in Bahrain.

Sheikh 'Isa ruled for fifty years, during which time he never broke faith with the English. He was also liked by his subjects for his generosity and sense of justice. But half a century of peace was not to Bahrain a bounty entire, nor to Sheikh 'Isa a crown of glory. I take but three events in his reign to show how that simple agreement, made by his predecessor, developed into a title-deed in the hand of the British Government; how, in other words, the Government of Bahrain was gradually Indianized.

The first was an uprising in Qatar (1895) against the Khalifahs. Bahrain was threatened, and Sheikh 'Isa asked the Political Agent at Abu Shihr for protection, or for permission to use what remained of the Bahrain fleet in defence. The Agent did not permit the latter; and he promised protection only on certain conditions, two of which were the establishment of a British Agency at Bahrain and the right to supervise the claims of British subjects in the island. The Khalifah Sheikhs in council chose the lesser evil, and the rebellion in Qatar was suppressed with a few shells from a British man-o'-war.

The second incident, which was the result of a quarrel, took place in 1903. The nephew of Sheikh 'Isa struck the servant of a German merchant, who appealed to the

Agency at Abu Shihr and to his own Government for redress. A few days later the Bahrain Government made amends to the German by paying his servant three thousand rupees. But this did not end the matter. The Political Agent at Abu Shihr hastened with his war-vessels and landed troops in Bahrain. He also carried with him a list of demands, as indemnity for insulting the servant of a German, which were forthwith complied with. What remained of the Bahrain fleet was burned ; the nephew of Sheikh 'Isa was sentenced to five years of exile ; and the claims of all foreign subjects were thenceforth to be heard at the British Agency of Bahrain.

All foreign subjects means about half of the population, which includes, besides the Indians and the Persians, the Arabs of Najd and Maskat and Kuwait. All these people are now the subjects of the British Agent, whose name is changed to Balliose. I know not what this means, but it may be a form of Indianization. Thus the British Government has set up a separate sovereignty in Bahrain. It has in fact divided the native Government into two, nay, into three powers. When I was there the triarchy consisted of the Sheikh, the Balliose and the President of the Municipality, a Persian by the name of Khan Bahadour Sharif. These three collaborated to give the island a decent Government ; but the maximum of efficiency and justice was only attained when two of them were neutralized. The Balliose, now and then, in minor cases, neutralized himself, that he might better neutralize, in weighty matters, his colleagues. The Persian had an eye always on the main chance and was therefore hand and glove with the Balliose. Moreover, being a Shi'ah, his influence in power was a disturbing factor. All the non-Shi'ah population, especially the Arabs of Najd, disliked him, protested against him, demanded his removal ; but the Balliose would not hear. A few months after I left Bahrain in the spring of 1923, the third event, in the series that led to complete Indianization, took place.

A Persian was charged with stealing a watch from the house of an Arab of Najd. The Persians resented the charge against their countryman; the Najd Arabs resented the interference of the Persians; and the outcome was a fight in the streets of Manamah which almost led to a general uprising. But the Balliose whose business it was to restore peace, because the parties involved were all foreigners and, therefore, his subjects, cabled for warships to Abu Shihr. The warships came and peace was restored.

But the political measures taken were even more drastic. Muhammad Sharif Khan Bahadour was cashiered to placate Ibn Sa'oud, who protested to the British Agent at Abu Shihr against the maltreatment of his subjects; old Sheikh 'Isa was deposed, because his Government was held responsible for the disturbances; his son Hamad was appointed Ameer in his place; the national courts were abolished, and a Council of Two, composed of the Balliose and the Ameer, took charge of the internal affairs of Bahrain. Thus was the Balliose, whose authority was limited to the foreign population, made a partner in the national Government; thus was the triarchy reduced to a duarchy, and the process of elimination is not yet at an end.

But the policy of the British Government in Bahrain differs in a measure from that which it pursued in other parts of the Arab Peninsula, as we shall see in the succeeding chapters on Aden and the Protectorates.

END OF PART FOUR

PART V

ADEN AND THE PROTECTORATES

ADEN AND THE PROTECTORATES

BOUNDARIES.—To the south, the Arabian Sea from Bab'ul-Mandib to Balhaf at the intersection of the two lines, 48 long. and 14 lat. ; to the east, Hadhramout ; to the west, the Red Sea ; and to the north, the territory under the control of the Imam of San'a.

Note.—The northern boundary line is uncertain, because the soldiers of the Imam have encroached upon the Protectorates, and will continue to do so as long as the relations between San'a and the British Government at Aden are not friendly.

AREA.—About two thousand and five hundred square miles.

POPULATION.—From three to four hundred thousand souls.

IMPORTANT TRIBES.—The Abdalis, the Yawafe', the Fadhlis, the 'Awaleq, the Hawashib and the Subbaihas.

IMPORTANT TOWNS.—Shaqrah, Al-Houtah and Balhaf on the coast of the Arabian Sea ; Lahaj, Abyan, Ansab, Musaimir and Haban inland.

RELIGIOUS SECTS.—Sunnah : Shafi'is and Hanafis. Shi'ah : Ja'faris, Ismailis and Zaidis. In Aden there are Jews, Hindus, Christians, and Parsis. Inland, some of the tribes do not even know Al-Islam, and they still live as their ancestors did in pre-Islamic pagan days.

WHALE.
Caught at Aden at low tide.

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CHAPTER I

THE TRINITY OF ADEN

MR. LLOYD GEORGE once spoke of an elastic formula as the best suited in the solution of England's foreign problems. In other words, be not too hard to bend, and bend not to the breaking point. It is not right to say, however, that this is England's governing principle everywhere outside the British Isles ; but there is no doubt that the formula of Mr. Lloyd George has been, with a rare exception, the basis of its policy in Arabia. The exception is that once in a while, as we have seen in Bahrain, a naval demonstration or the firing of a gun is necessary to make the formula more effective.

Those who are acquainted with the geographical, the political and the religious conditions of Arabia, as well as with the conflicting interests and ambitions of its rulers, will see some wisdom in a policy that can be stretched to every place, without breaking or without losing aught of its effect. Stretch it from Aden to San'a, and it will allure the Imam ; stretch it from Kuwait to beyond the Dahna, or from Trans-Jordania to the Jawf, and it will capture Ibn Sa'oud ; stretch it from Hudaidah and it will inspissate in Sabya ; from Jeddah eastward, and no matter how it sinuates or thins down, it will not break even in the shadow of the Kaaba. Success depends upon a dexterous hand. Given the rope, you can make a noose of any size : given the glass, you can mix the drink to suit your purpose, as well as the taste of your friend.

Indeed, England's treaties with the various rulers—

Sheikhs, Ameers, Sultans, Imams and Kings—are of amazing elasticity and scope. The nooses of the Aden Residency are especially noteworthy. From the noose that strangles to the noose that pinches to the noose that hangs loose around the neck, these are a few manifestations of the application of the elastic formula. There are even shades of difference between the various degrees of pressure and relaxation, which the various tribes of the Lower Yaman render necessary ; for among the Sultans of these tribes, there is the Highness who wears only a loin cloth and the Highness who dresses like an Indian rajah. These are the two poles of the problem ; and between them is a barbarism that aspires to civilization and a civilization that sweeps with its cloak the dust of barbarism. No ruler, therefore, can make his influence encompassing and his wisdom all-guiding, without the formula of Mr. Lloyd George.

This formula, like a Hindu deity, may manifest itself in various forms ;—in treaties of friendship ; in monthly stipends ; in a salute of guns when a Sultan honours Aden with a visit (he may be coming to collect his stipend notwithstanding) ; in titles and decorations ; in espousing the cause of one house aspiring to power against another ; and last but not least, in safeguarding the independence of every Sultan or Ameer according to his own desire, which incidentally serves the interest of the British Government. Aye, every Sultan or Ameer or Sheikh of a tribe insists upon absolute independence ;—and there is no harm if it is fettered by a monthly stipend and a yearly present. Here is the biggest misfortune of the Arabs, which serves the biggest interest of Great Britain in Arabia. But who is mostly to blame ? England, through her Resident, says to the Ameer : You want to be independent ; you are independent : I recognise your independence ; and I pay you moreover a stipulated sum of money as long as you maintain your independence : I echo your own desire, and here is the pact of friendship and protection.

THE MAIN STREET OF TAWAHI, OR STEAMER POINT, ADEN.

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Few are the rulers, whether they border on civilization or on barbarism, who can resist these temptations. But in that pact of friendship and protection is the noose that strangles ; in it is the clause that the stipendiary 'will not enter into any correspondence or agreement or treaty with any foreign nation or power,[1] except with the knowledge and sanction of the British Government ; [2] . . . and that he will not cede, sell, mortgage, lease, hire, or give, or otherwise dispose of the territory (under English protection) and its dependencies, or any other part of the same, at any time, to any Power other than the British Government.'

Great Britain does not want any other European power in Aden or around Aden ; to which the Sultans, who take her money and accept her protection, heartily agree. But the protection is mostly fictitious. The fact is that the party who pays the subsidy is in reality more in need of protection than the party who receives it ; the subsidy is in a sense an investment, which gives an excellent return.

It is after all a business proposition, and I shall stop here, before taking the reader into Aden proper, to explain it. From a certain native point of view the various effects of the elastic formula are but a gamut of pain ; but there is another point of view, which is not entirely British. The whole world is interested where, in one form or another, the whole world passes. In other words, there are certain places on this little globe of ours where order and security and a business-like method of government should always prevail. Such a place is Aden, a very important station on the highway of world traffic and navigation.

But all this importance is centred in the outer town, which is called Tawahi by the Arabs, and which the

[1] All the other independent Arab rulers are considered as 'foreign powers.'

[2] 'In return for a considerable subsidy,' says the Official Handbook on Arabia, 'a British Resident's advice is to be treated as paramount.' When the Chief is strong, he considers nothing paramount but gold—and more gold.

English named Steamer Point. Here are the consulates, the banks, the hotels, the forts, the Government, the little statue of Queen Victoria, and a few stores, where odds and ends from East and West are sold at fancy prices. None of these, however, nor all of them together, justify the constant need of order and security; for if this were all of Tawahi, or Steamer Point, the world would not lose much, should the 'protected' tribes rush down upon it from the hills and set it, after the looting, on fire. Where then are the interests of the whole world involved?

Among the hills that surround Steamer Point, and the modern forts on the hill-tops, which are connected with each other by subterranean passages, there is a little colony on the height, east of the Resident's home, which has nothing to do directly with finance or war or colonial politics. It is a colony of English people, to be sure, who live apart, not out of snobbishness, but to better mind their own business; and they have their own hotel, besides the private homes, and their own club and tennis court. Also, their own reason of being, and that is a centre of activity, which is one of the world-centres of communication. From that height in Steamer Point the wires of modern magic, the magic of practical science, extend east and south and west and north in every direction—to the Far East, to the Philippines, to Australia and New Zealand, to South Africa, to Europe and America. Indeed, from all the five continents the bridled lightning is sent humming and flashing hundreds of fathoms under ocean waves—a spark in a wire, a wire in a cloth, a cloth soaked in tar and encased in waterproof, this is the Courier of the World—and the colony of clerks on that height receive and distribute his messages night and day. Thus the East keeps in touch with the West; thus are the distances bridged with lightning for business and intelligence; thus is the progress of the world maintained.

There are certainly bigger telegraph offices in the world than this of Aden, but they are not more important.

ANOTHER VIEW OF THE MAIN STREET OF TAWAHI, ADEN.

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Abolish the colony on that height, silence the hundred instruments which buzz and click night and day, cut the cable which connects the Orient and the antipodes with Europe and America, and lo, the oceans will be plunged again in gloom, distance will revert to its ancient tyranny, and the continents will become insular with nothing to connect them but steam and the sail. That colony of telegraph operators, therefore, is one of the living centres of the intelligence and the progress of the world.

But there are two other centres in Aden, the one for replenishing steam-power, the other for guiding it at night; the one consists of black piles rising in squares and pyramids near the water and adding a touch of realism to the inferno of Steamer Point, the other stands aloft, above all the heights, housed in a circular tower, protected with glass, and made articulate with colours. King Coal, the Harbour Light, and the Electric Wire—here is Aden's trinity of materialism; a trinity that pays dividends, which even the Orientals do not at heart disdain.

Herein is the importance of this spot in the south-west corner of Arabia. But what is the basis of its importance? Science and industry. And what are the safeguards of science and industry? Security, to be sure, and order. Now, can the Sultan of Lahaj or the Imam of San'a maintain the security and order which this trinity of materialism requires? No enlightened Arab, however chauvinistic, will answer to-day in the affirmative. And can the world to-day, west or east of Suez, dispense with electricity and steam? Not even Mr. Ghandi, I think, will say, Yes. And can the Orient be absolutely independent of the other part of the world? or should it, if it could, cut off all its connections with the Occident? No matter how fanatically Oriental one may be, if he has a grain of sense, he can but make one true answer—No.

A hand is therefore needed to direct and protect this important station of world traffic and navigation, and that hand is now England's. It may be to-morrow Japan's or it

may be Arabia's, but to-morrow is with God. I can imagine what will happen if it goes back meanwhile to Arab hands. There will be no massacre of the foreign population, that is certain ; there will not be even tribute to pay ; but there will be shipwrecks at sea, and chaos in the port, and complete paralysis in travel and communication, in traffic and trade between East and West. It may be only for a short period of time, but the calamity will be felt everywhere. One has to come to Aden to fully realize this, and to realize also that England, like the pianist in the legend, is doing her best.

I said that the directing and protecting hand is England's ; but the statement should be qualified. Aden needs no protection from the sea, at least in normal times ; its only and immediate danger is from the tribes around it ; and these could compel the British Government to keep stationed there twenty regiments at the least. But this is too costly. We have seen how the East India Company refused Capt. Haines, the first Governor of Aden, reinforcements and what policy it recommended to him. It is cheaper to pay the Arabs, even though for the purpose of fighting each other. This dictum is still sound. But when the British Government succeeded the East India Company in India, and therefore in Aden, it came to the conclusion that it was neither safe nor practical, even in making treaties of peace and friendship with the tribes, to keep them too close to Aden. A zone, like a shield, should be established around the place—a zone where the Government could station at least its few regiments.

Gradually, therefore, the land was acquired ; sometimes by purchase, sometimes by diplomacy, and at other times by means which the English would not sanction at home. This protecting zone now extends from a point on the west coast called Al-Ghadir up to Dar'ul-Amir in a northern direction and thence north-east to Umm'ul-'Umud on the sea. At several points along this line, which is roughly a quarter of a circle, about 25 miles, there are

British troops, mostly Indian. This is the bulwark; but it did not prove, after all, impregnable. At various times the tribes, especially the Subbaihas and the Hawashib, made serious dents in it. The British troops can keep peace and order in the Aden zone; but who is to protect the British troops?

What is to be done? If it costs one thousand pounds sterling a day to defend Aden, supposing that ten regiments are required for the purpose, it will certainly cost that much to defend also the Aden zone, what we first thought to be an unbreakable shield. But let us suppose that both defence lines will only cost half that sum to maintain, that is a thousand pounds a day, and that the British Government can conquer the surrounding tribes and annex their territory, make it a part of the protective zone. It will then have to double and treble its military power to protect the greater zone against the attacks of the Arabs of the hills, the Zaidis and the Shafi'is, particularly the former. Ergo, the farther we penetrate into Al-Yaman, the greater the cost and the greater the danger. Why then penetrate at all? Why not make peace with the tribes, befriend their chiefs, humour them, decorate them, fire cannons in their honour, and make *them* the defenders and protectors of Aden? Even if we have to pay them subsidies, it is still a bargain.

Let me give you the other bill of costs. Around the little zone, the shield of Aden, a bigger zone of friendliness and power was, in the course of time, established; and in this outer zone, which begins at Bab'ul-Mandib, reaches at its highest point to a distance of about seventy-five miles, and ends near the western boundaries of Hadhramout, are the so-called nine Protectorates. Let us now suppose that every ruler, Sultan, Sheikh, or Ameer, of these several independent States, gets from the Residency four hundred rupees a month (this is the largest stipend paid, excepting that of the Sultan of Lahaj),[1] and that the leading

[1] *See* the list of stipends at the end of this Volume.

sheikhs, the political leaders and henchmen of every ruler, get an equal sum. The total amount paid to the nine rulers and their men is therefore seven or eight thousand rupees, or five hundred pounds sterling a month. Now, if this were paid daily, and not monthly, the British Government would still be saving an equal sum at least every day. This is a conservative estimate ; and if there is a mistake or an exaggeration in either bill of costs, that of the army and that of the Protectorates, it is below and not above the true figures. The proportion, however, does not change. If ten regiments, the minimum estimate, are required to protect Aden, which protection can be made unnecessary by the nine rulers, then every ruler is rendering to Great Britain a service equal to a regiment's. But the pay is all out of proportion ; for if it costs, say, $5,000 a day to maintain 10,000 soldiers, the friendship of the tribes only costs 8,000 rupees ($2,500) a month ! Thus, the elastic formula is more profitable than any colonial scheme ever conceived of.

CHAPTER II

IN THE CRATER

As we approach Aden in the morning and turn into the harbour, the striking view of the mountains changes in form and colour. The texture, too, is variable. The haze is a mantle woven on different looms : it is diaphanous ; it is granular ; it is compact ; and when the sun rises, its slowly falling rays impart to it an opalescence shod with violet and purple tints. The serrated peaks now rise dramatically, now move slowly and rhythmically into the picture, lending it a lyric grace. But where the sun strikes ruthlessly, the mantle is torn, dissipated, and the barrenness of these mountains is revealed.

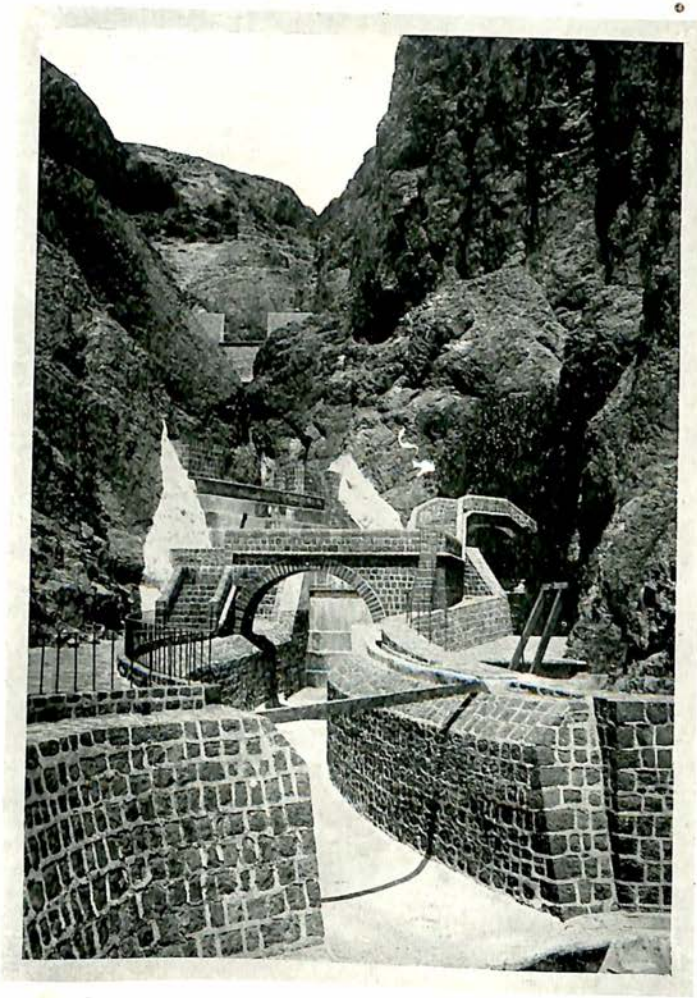
Slowly we turn into the harbour, and the city is seen crouching at the foot of Mt. Shamsa, which is like Gibraltar in form, and which rises sheer, abrupt, behind a half-circle of buildings in the heart of Steamer Point. The sun, while rising behind a bank of clouds, sends through a rift a cataract of gold, which soaks in the mist and transforms it into an aquatint. But the picture is short-lived indeed ; for the clouds that were flirting around the summit suddenly fall upon it. It is like throwing at the canvas a can of white paint. Steamer Point is effaced for a spell ; but soon a strong shaft of light disperses the clouds, and it comes again into view, stripped of every glamour. The black masses, coal piles, are in the foreground ; the forts on the hilltops are conspicuous ; the harbour-light rises in the centre of the picture, and all around is a scene as dull and drab as any port in the British Isles. But to our left,

when the clouds are completely dispelled, another skyline looms behind the first, a little higher, but similar in form; and the two mountain summits, a sort of duet, rise together and fall, rhythmically, harmoniously, and vanish in the north. It is a compensation for the commonplace of Steamer Point.

The boatmen of Aden are noisy and vulgar and unreliable. With a coarse gibberish from a dozen tongues, they make the harbour hideous; and because thay are not allowed on board, they do business with a rope, at one end of which is a weight, at the other a basket, and sometimes give you a black eye in the bargain. One of them asked ten shillings for an object, in which a lady near me at the rail was interested. She asked my advice. Give him, I said, a shilling. Which she did. The man came down to five, then to three, and finally, with a curse in Arabic, he threw up the end of the rope to which the weight is attached and hit the lady full in the face.

An English traveller, who visited Aden in 1844 and wrote a book about it, speaks of being carried in a ton-jon through the principal streets. Whatever a ton-jon is, it has long since disappeared. Even the carriage and the camel are fast being squelched by the Ford. The camel, alas! no longer shies or pauses to wonder at an automobile; he has become *blasé*. Aye, and in Aden he has fallen from his high estate. He is hitched to a cart; he is made to draw a water-barrel; and—magnanimity of an Arab!—I saw him one day towing a disabled Ford to Steamer Point.

The distance from Steamer Point to Aden proper, or Aden Camp, is about five miles along the coast. We go through the Somali village of Ma'alla, past the custom-house there, and up a winding road to what seems like a blind wall. But soon we reach the tunnel, which is an opening in the mountain, wide enough at the bottom for a carriage road and almost closing at a height of about sixty feet, where it is spanned by a bridge. This is the gate of



THE TANKS, ADEN.

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Aden, and suddenly, as we go through it with a crash, we come upon the city, which is set in the midst of a circle of hills, in the very crater of a long extinguished volcano.

A modest—and modern—town, with nothing conspicuous—and truly ancient—but a solitary minaret and the tanks. The latter especially are the show of Aden. The tablet tells nothing of their mysterious origin ; but prior to 1856 they were buried in debris ; and since then, after being discovered by an Englishman and reconstructed by the Government, they were called tanks. An awful name, a barbarous name for the magnificently picturesque, which evokes, moreover, the past. In 1856 they were discovered ; but they must have been constructed when the master builders of the Yaman were the Jinn—in the Jinn age. And in spite of the rational historian, who speaks of the Ghassans and the Himyars as the real builders, the Jinn still maintain their reputation among the people of Al-Yaman.

These 'tanks' are a series of reservoirs constructed above each other between two mountains, rising and receding through the pass, following its bent ; and they are connected with subterranean aqueducts, over which is an attractive path for a promenade leading to the top reservoir, which is at a height of about four hundred feet. When full, they flow into each other. The capacity of the first, or the highest, is more than half a million gallons, while that of the last, the largest, is over a million and a half.

It had been raining for the last four days—the first time in eight years—when I first saw these reservoirs, and they were almost full. It was therefore a day of jubilation, and the people were out in their gayest colours. They crowded the rising and winding promenade path and gave me many a glimpse suggestive of the Golden Stairs of Burns-Jones. The Jews of Aden, men, women and children, in red and green and yellow, predominated ; and what a contrast to one who has been accustomed to behold the Jewish crowd

in all its unctuousness choking one of the principal thoroughfares of New York ! I wonder, indeed, what they of the Fifth-Avenue-Noon-Hour would say of these quiet and clean and meek and mellow children of Israel.

The crater, thanks to Time, is now habitable. The heat is not as it was before the deluge or many thousand years before the ' before.' For since then the volcano had some geological reverses, was in fact dissipating its fortune ; and having eventually gone bankrupt, it is now enjoying a temperature of 100° F. (in the summer) and a mixed population of thirty thousand souls. Some of these souls —the Bunias [1]—are reincarnated in dogs and cats and peacocks ; others—the Parsis—return to the primal fire ; still others—the Muslems—await that Paradise where the huri is ever a virgin and the garden of each man's happiness is ever filled with huris ; and there are those who care not what becomes of their souls so long as their capital is safe, and others who pretend to have charted the whole sea of the Hereafter and found therein the isles of eternal bliss —for themselves alone. They all live in the crater in peace; but they are as barren of sympathy for each other as the hills around them.

One morning, when I was sharing the crater with this population, the S.P.C.A. doled out a little sympathy, through the Resident's Assistant, to the horses of the town. The sorriest looking jades I have ever seen were brought to the public square for examination ; and when those that had outgrown their usefulness were sentenced, the cry of their owners was pathetic. The shooting did not take place in the square, otherwise the Bunia population would have joined in the protest and lamentation. Their motive is different than that of the owners. Although religious fanatics like everybody else, they are not utterly devoid of virtue, these Bunias. They have an asylum in Aden Camp for animals of all kinds, which they rescue from the ' savage ' other fellow, where they are fed and

[1] A Bunia is a Hindu shopkeeper.

cared for till the end of their days. The Bunia individual 'zoos' are models of the higher human virtue. Buy a cock or a chicken or a cat or a dog, and free it, save its life—that is their motto.

Besides, what abodes of eternal hope and joy are in the crater. The Bunias have a cremation station; the Parsis have a temple of silence; the Muhammadans have a mosque and a dervish circle; the Jews have a synagogue and a fellow Jew who is worth thirty million pounds; the Capuchins have a shop and a confessional; the Episcopals have a church on the hilltop, to which the soldiers march every Sunday headed by a brass band; and Tommy Atkins has a dance hall, a cinema and a football field. The hospitable crater!

But every one in his or her lifetime has a foretaste of the Hindu's cremation station. The crater and the hills around it are natural accumulators of heat; but there is little or no humidity. At noon it is like the dry-heat room of a Turkish bath; and if you are returning from Steamer Point or Ma'alla in the afternoon, as soon as you emerge out of the pass, you feel the blast upon your cheeks and in your eyes as if you stood in front of a furnace. It comes out of the ground, the heat, and out of the rocks, and from the fissures and cavities of the hills; and what is accumulated during the day lasts till the sun rises to replenish it the following morning. For this reason, the nights are also hot, except when there is a breeze. Otherwise, the flow is steady and unremittent. But the breezes are rare. The savage mood is dominant also in the wind, which drives you, when it rises, to the nearest shelter, if you are outside, or to the innermost room of the house, if you are within.

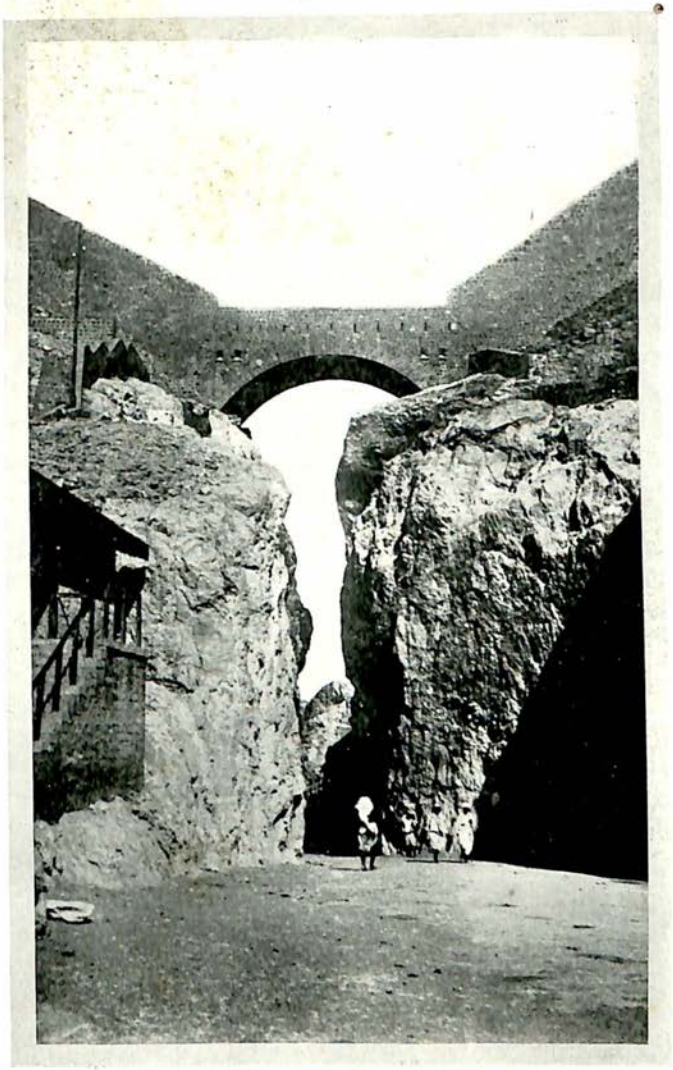
Aden often gets the full effect of a sandstorm, which blows from the East; during which time the atmosphere is clouded, and the interior of the houses are covered with dust and sand. At night, those gales often wake people from sleep and drive them within, if they are sleeping in the porch or on the roof. The house of my friend, which

I shared with him, had a big porch facing the square—and incidentally the storm. The first few nights I got up like himself and moved my cot within, which was a nuisance. I decided therefore to cover myself up to my head and stick it out; but when the storm subsided, about twenty minutes after, the single sheet was as heavy as ten quilts, and as I got out of my cot I felt the desert under my feet.

In spite of the heat of these cleansing gales, there are diseases in Aden. I was vaccinated for smallpox while I was there; but I did not escape malaria, which was afterwards my travelling companion. Nor could one living on the square escape the harrowing noises of the Camp—lorries, motor-cycles, brass bands, Ford cut-outs, tooting horns—the worst abominations of civilization—and the children in a neighbouring school singing three times a day in Gujrati *God Save the King*. Otherwise, in the bazar, for instance, the town dozes under a canopy of calm. Considerable business is nevertheless transacted; and in spite of the rivalry, commercial and religious, between four of the shrewdest and most self-righteous people in the world, the Bunia, the Parsi, the Bohra [1] and the Jew, nothing ever disturbs the even tenor of security and peace. God save the King! I do not know who of these four Orientals is the shrewdest. But I can tell you who, among this heterogeneous population, knows nothing about business, and can therefore be a disturber of the peace. Some one has likened him to the lily, because he is tall and straight and fair. A dusky lily, he is, that toils nevertheless and spins.

The most noble looking black, north and south of the equator, the African aristocrat; bare-headed and bare-footed; wearing no sewn clothes; only a *foutah* of cotton print, sometimes of Indian stuff, always of brilliant colours, which he winds around the waist; five yards of white sheeting which he throws over his shoulder like a toga; a walking stick in his hand; and *arak* stick—the tooth brush

[1] The Bohras are an Isma'ili sect of India.



THE PASS TO ADEN CAMP, ADEN.

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—in his mouth—behold, the black Roman senator from Somaliland. I have seldom seen a Somali who did not walk with his head in the air. But the merchants of Aden will tell you that, although he makes a good servant, does his work thoroughly, he must be continually watched. I enjoyed nothing so much as watching a party of Somalis, six abreast at times, sailing down the square, chewing at their *arak* sticks, and as self-conscious as the dandies of the White Way. On holidays they all have to surrender their sticks to the police. They are pugnacious. I was talking once to a Somali and an Arab. 'Which of you,' I asked, 'is afraid of the other.' 'He is,' replied the Somali, shaking his stick at the Arab, who said nothing.

As a servant the Arab is faithful and trustworthy; but he is lazy. As a merchant he is honest and reliable; but he has not the energy of the Parsi or the Bunia. As a man of means or a man of learning, he is modest and unassuming; but he lacks the curiosity of the Bohra and the ambition of the Jew. But whatever he is, he is seldom wanting in dignity and poise. Nor does he as a merchant ever resort to deception. I asked a coffee merchant if all the coffee he exported was from the Yaman—pure. 'Nothing pure goes out of Aden or comes into it,' he replied. He then took me into the storerooms to show me the different grades which were in separate heaps on the floor. Women and girls were busy sifting the stones and dirt from the beans. 'These,' he said, pointing to two heaps, 'are from the Yaman, and not of the best. The others are from Hara (Abyssinia). The best quality Hara is about as good as the inferior Yaman. . . . What we send out is a mixture of both.'[1]

This is true also of the famous spices of Al-Yaman, most of which come into Aden from India, from Java, from Abyssinia, from Somaliland, and are reshipped to Europe

[1] There is no Mokha coffee. Mokha was the first port on the Red Sea out of which Yaman coffee was shipped to Europe. Hence its name, which is now but a name. Like the hemp of Yucatan, Sisal, which is the name of the port from which it was first exported.

and America. Even gum-Arabic is only so in name : it should be called gum-Somali. Myrrh and frankincense, which are imported from Makher and Berbera (British and Italian Somaliland), are found in Aden only in sample envelopes and in sacks. But there is one man in the crater, the *tumbul*, or spice-man, who exhibits all the spices of the East on a little push-cart, and who makes his appearance in the square but once a week. His is indeed a curious business.

Hear ye the *tumbul's* cry—*tumbu-u-u-ul* ! He comes, pushing his little cart, on which is a tray with a quantity of green leaves upon it covered with a wet cloth, and around the tray are compartments and several bottles. He stops before the door, and men and children gather around him. Deliberately, he doles out the great boon. He first takes a leaf or a part of it, spreads something on it from one of the bottles, something else from another ; he then sprinkles upon them a powder of one colour from a sort of saltcellar, another powder from another receptacle ; after which he uncovers the compartments, takes a pinch of this and a pinch of that, a bean or two and bits of bark, wraps the leaf over them in the shape of a heart, and presents it with his good wishes to the buyer. Arabs and Somalis and Hindus, they crowd around him as the children in New York around the cart of the tutti-frutti man.

What is it he sells ? A mouthful of spices for the liver, for the digestion, for the appetite, and for the good of the heart and the soul. A roll of spices for two *baisas* (an eighth of a cent), and most everything in it comes into Aden from India. The leaf is that of the *tumbul* tree, and it is imported from Bengal between layers of wet cloth. The spice-man is seen in the street the day it arrives, which is his day of business—his one day a week ; and not until the next west-bound steamer calls at Aden is he seen again.

The leaf of the *tumbul* is large, and its importation is costly. Hence its division into parts. It tastes in its

natural state like chicklet; but when he covers it with pepper, cinnamon, nutmegs, bits of dried senna, shavings of cocoanut, pulverized cardamom seeds, a little lime mixture, a little *ghat*-paste, and even a pinch of powdered Persian tobacco, I cannot, for the life of me, tell you what it tastes like.—For the good of your liver, be a generous giver. For the good of your soul, eat it whole. And let the *baisas* toll, Allah keep thee from dole!

Other things are done in the crater for the good of the soul, among them the performance (*halaqah*) of the Rashidiyah cult, which I have alluded to in a former chapter.[1] We attended this *halaqah*, which was run at that time by an Egyptian who survived many scandals in Aden. The choir of boys, who stood in a line facing the men, clapped their hands while singing melodiously the lines of the Sufi poet Al-Fared.

'Thou hast taken but my heart—a part of me;
Is there any harm if I were all with thee?'

The men cried, Allah, Allah! while swinging their bodies violently and swiftly to and fro; some of them swooned with devotion—their eyes were all white with ecstasy; and everyone seemed but a senseless vibrating unit in a mystically animated group. But there was nothing mystical in the singing, which was all about love. Hence, I think, the scandals.

On our way back we passed through a narrow lane which was dimly lighted by a few rays from the electrics in the square; and I was startled by a figure seated on the ground, against the wall, and pulling at something with his hand. It was a rope which hung from a window on the third—top—floor of the house, and the figure was a punkah-boy fanning his master, up in that room, to sleep. We were passing by the house, under the window, of the Jewish millionaire, who lived in fear of being assassinated. Besides, he, a man of eighty-five, had recently taken unto

[1] Part II, chap. III. p. 157.

himself a young wife, a girl of fifteen, who had pinned her hope, it was said, upon the smallpox epidemic, and he would trust no man, not even the punkah-boy, within the house.

The punkah is not the only antiquated thing in this outwardly modern and progressive city ; for in spite of the fact that the English have now been in Aden eighty-seven years, the streets are still sprinkled by a man carrying a skin of water on his back, and the drinking water is still distributed in barrels on carts drawn by camels. Now, we are told by an Arab historian, who does not kowtow to the Jinn, that one of the governors of Aden in the fifteenth century, Abd'ul-Wahhab by name, had aqueducts built for the conveyance of water to the city from a well ten miles away, where now is the town of Sheikh Othman. But there are the reservoirs, a superb monument to the enterprising spirit of the ancient Arabs.

Even in modern history, a hundred years before the English occupation, Aden was a flourishing and attractive Arab city, a city of wealth, refinement, hospitality, and picturesque beauty. I shall read you a page, not from the Arab historian, but from a European who visited it at the beginning of the eighteenth century. In 1709 a French expedition, sailing around the Cape, stopped at Aden on its way to Mokha, to negotiate a treaty for the importation of coffee into France. A gentleman named La Roque accompanied the expedition and left a record of its voyage and its experiences in an interesting little volume.[1]

Le Roque was not an Arab scholar ; but we forgive him, for his accurate descriptions, the liberties he has taken in the transliteration of Arabic names, which are corrupted beyond recognition. When they sailed into the harbour, the Governor sent a deputation to meet them and sent with them quantities of food and refreshments. They came with boats 'chargés de quantité de rafraîchissements.' The Frenchmen were then escorted to the Amir'ul-Bahr (from which is admiral in English), and he accompanied them

[1] *Voyage de l'Arabie Heureuse*, par Le Sieur La Roque (Amsterdam, 1716).

THE VIADUCT OUTSIDE OF ADEN.

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to the Governor, who accorded them a most gracious reception and made them his guests.

They remained two weeks in Aden, and the pages of Le Sieur La Roque glow with enthusiasm. He tells of its handsome buildings, its mosques, its fortifications, and its aqueducts about a league from the city, which furnished all the inhabitants with excellent water. But nothing did he admire so much as the domed public baths, which were lined with marble or jasper, and adorned with galleries supported by magnificent pillars. In a coloured etching of Aden, made by a Dutch artist a few years before, the many white domes of the baths are as conspicuous as the minarets of the mosques.

This was the Aden of those days, an Arab city with a dash of the splendour of ancient Baghdad. The Bunia traders had already come from India, and La Roque speaks of them as the Jews of the bazar. But the dominating manner was Arabic ; the language and the customs of the inhabitants were Arabic ; the Governor was a learned Zaidi, who had written a treatise on coffee ; the people dressed in flowing elegant robes and spoke in a flowing elegant accent the language of the Prophet ; and, moreover, they practised hospitality. But what they wear to-day would baffle, besides shocking, a costumier ; what they speak is a hodge-podge of Ordu and Italian, Persian and English, Turkish and Gujrati, with Arabic as a background ; and hospitality is fast becoming an effete tradition.

The Frenchmen, after leaving Aden, went to Mokha, where they met with like courtesy and kindness ; and the Governor sent an escort with them to the King and Imam of the Zioud, Al-Mahdi-li-din'Allah, who was then in Mawahib near Zamar. The old King (87, and married a girl of seventeen when they were there) was loath to let them go after a month of royal favours and hospitality. Presents of horses and swords were made to the Captains of the three vessels and their crew, and 500 bags of the best

coffee were offered to take to the Grand Seigneur in Paris, the King of France, but were refused for lack of space in the boats.

An amusing incident is noted by La Roque. The King was suffering from an abscess in his neck when the Frenchmen arrived at Mawahib ; and when they were granted an audience, 'le chef de notre députation voulut commencer le petit discours qu'il avait préparé, mais le Roi, apparemment pressé de son mal, l'interrompit pour demander lequel d'entre les Français était le Médecin.' It was not the time for speeches. The King took the doctor into an adjoining room and an operation was at once performed.

The Jews of Al-Yaman were not better off in those days than they are at the present time. They were allowed to live, however, and trade, after paying tribute. In Mawahib they occupied a quarter of the town, but they were compelled to live outside the city, 'n'ayant pas la liberté de coucher dans la ville.' In San'a and Zamar to-day, the ghetto is also outside the city wall. Aden is in this, at least, an improvement.

THE CAMEL HITCHED TO THE WATER WAGON, ADEN.

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CHAPTER III

THE SAINT WHO MADE A PILGRIMAGE TO HIS OWN SHRINE

SAINTHOOD in Arabia is neither an accomplishment nor an art ; it is a positive state like that of childhood and age ; and while it partakes of both it projects itself beyond both in an ecstasy of belief. Good deeds are not necessarily required to prove ' the state ; ' but those who attain it often reveal, after death, the beauty and the bounty of their spirit. In life, they neither spin nor carry a water-skin ; but they have the gesture that imparts, especially to women, the secret of the divine and makes eventually a whole community whirl in joy. They are, indeed, the gods of the merry-go-round, the patrons of the pedler, the brokers of the bazar, the friends of the juggler, yea, and the wings divine that bring the rainbow and the moon to the children.

There is one saint in Aden, the *wali* 'Aidarouth, who was a Muslem in the flesh, and who is now the guardian spirit of the crater. The English and Indian soldiers stationed on the roof of this dead volcano are superfluous. Besides the family of the *wali*, all his relatives, immediate and implied, neither spin, because of his sainthood, nor carry a water-skin. The alms-box is seldom empty.

There is another *wali* in Steamer Point, who specialized in the safety and prosperity of fishermen. He performed miracles before the British came to Aden ; the salt-water of the sea, which was sprinkled on his festal days in the shadow of his tomb, turned into rose water. But this is no

longer possible. Too much rum and too much pork pass by the tomb every day and pollute the atmosphere. This *wali* has neither brothers nor cousins ; every fisherman is his brother : he is even communal. There is always a red flag over the white dome of the tomb of sheikh Ahmad of the Hook.

Ten miles out of the volcanic sterility and the isolated sanctity of Aden and the Crater is the oasis of Sheikh Othman, where, in addition to walled gardens and wells and mosquitoes, there are cafés and Somali girls and a police station. There is also an aerodrome on the way, many salt-pits, too, and another contingent of the British army which infiltrates what was once a healthy population. For this and other reasons Sheikh Othman sorely needed a *wali*, a saint.

The first man to realize this was Hashem-Bahr, a citizen of the Crater, a Muslem of amazing, alarming reticence, who walked with the lowly and disinherited, but never uttered a syllable against any one, not even against the rich. But he ate the *ghat* like every true Yamani, and he spoke in secret to women, who unveiled to him their hearts. He also prayed his five daily prayers like an ordinary Muslem and often retired into the recesses of the hill-circled Crater to commune with Allah and the Prophet. Hashem-Bahr must have worried much about Sheikh Othman. The soldiers of the English, the Somali girls, the mosquito-breeding wells ! O, thou most Merciful and Compassionate, send a saint to Sheikh Othman.

Never in the flesh did Hashem-Bahr make a revelation, never did he to mortal man unveil his heart. But he broke speech with women, who came to him for council and consolation. They came with their purses as well as their troubles. Nevertheless, Hashem-Bahr stuck to his job as porter to one of the merchants of Aden. I spoke with this merchant, who told me that the man was not marked by any outward sign of saintliness, nor was there in his words or actions aught that intimated a hidden

power. He was as sane as a Parsi, as shrewd as a Bunia, as meek as a Jew.

'He sat at that doorstep,' said his erstwhile employer, 'and dozed in the morning and ate *ghat* in the afternoon. . . . Sometimes he would disappear for days, and when he returned he seemed as if he were possessed or in a trance. Once his appearance, after one of those disappearances, was very alarming. He walked into this place mumbling to himself the words of the Prophet, "If thou ride the whirlwind to run away from thy bread, thy bread will ride the lightning and overtake thee." . . . On another occasion he spoke to me about a mosque in Sheikh Othman which he himself wanted to build. Of a certainty, I said in my heart, he is crazy. But he continued to talk about the mosque even in his hours of sanity. And one morning, I swear *billah*! Hashem-Bahr came to me with a bag of money, paper, silver and gold, and asked me to purchase for him a plot of land in Sheikh Othman.'

The land was purchased, in the very heart of the town, and the mosque in the course of a few years was built. A nice little mosque it is, with a white dome and a white minaret as well as a palm tree, a well, and a fountain in the open court. To this mosque Hashem-Bahr often made pilgrimages and remained inside for many days without food or drink. A few years after it was built, however, he was visited, by the grace of Allah, with the chills and fever; and he remained for many days in what was afterwards called the Bed of the Miracle, during which time he asked, he demanded, he insisted that he be buried in his own mosque under the white dome.

But this required a permission from the British authorities, and the permission required political influence, and the influence required a merchant, noted and willing. The employer of Hashem-Bahr was therefore called upon. He could not refuse; he felt impelled, in truth, to do the will of his former porter. But the said authorities, who suspected all *mullas* and *walis*—there is always a political

string to their rosaries—were at first obdurate. The fever was gaining upon Hashem-Bahr, and his friends went back and forth without any success. The Keeper of the Seal of the Residency was not susceptible to any influence, divine or satanic. So the word was, at last, uttered—the word that was destined to seal the message of sainthood. 'Tell the Ingliz,' said the sick man, 'that I am not going to die, *inshallah*, before the permission is granted.'

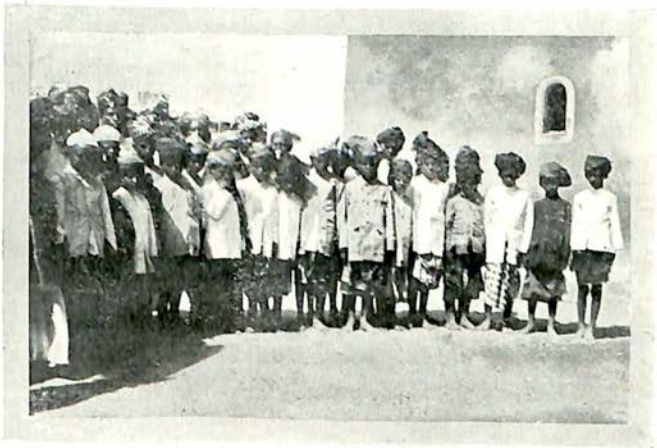
The message, the ultimatum, of Hashem-Bahr was carried to the British authorities, and, of a truth—the merchant, the whole Crater asseverates,—the permit was signed about an hour before his death. He was then removed, in solemn silence and awe, from the Bed of the Miracle to the mosque he had built and was buried under the white dome upon which he had often gazed with the ecstasy of divine promise and expectation. And this came to pass in our own generation, twenty-five years ago.

One man told me—I think he is a relative of the *wali* of the Crater—that Hashem-Bahr used to visit his mosque at night riding on the shoulders of a Jinni. But, much as I desired to get all the facts in the case, I could not verify this statement. Malice and envy! they are citizens of the world and are at home, it seems, everywhere.

The truth is that Hashem-Bahr made pilgrimages to his own shrine neither walking, nor riding a camel, but in an automobile. A few friends and followers, accompanied him on the pilgrimage and began to whisper about the great day after the holy man dies. The great day came; and it continues to come to Sheikh Othman once a year, in the fruit season, and the followers of Hashem-Bahr come from Aden, from Lahaj, and from the neighbouring hills to partake of the miracle and rejoice.

A great day, indeed. The Arab's love of colour, of dancing, of wonders, and of sweets, is seldom thus fully gratified. The rainbow, broken into a thousand pieces, moves everywhere in an indescribable glamour, and a chaos of fashion struts abroad. Scarcely anyone—of the

THE MIRACLE PERFORMERS AT THE FETE OF HASHEM BAHR, SHEIKH OTHMAN.



SCHOOL CHILDREN, LAHAJ.

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male population, of course—is dressed like his fellow pilgrim. A solemn grandeur is echoed even by the children. One boy wears a long coat, cut like a Prince Albert, made of purple-flowered blue silk, while another, in the same mood, but with a different manner, just winds a cloth of red and yellow stripes around his loins and a scarf to match around his head. The variety of turbans in colour and shape is bewildering, and in the procession it is transporting. It suggests a field overgrown with all kinds of flowers—a flower-field that exists only in a poet's dream in this part of Arabia. Indeed, to the colourless and arid surroundings of Aden, where everything, like Homer's world, is sable, this is a welcome and brilliant contrast. In the name of Hashem-Bahr the balance is attained. The saint who brings supernal joy to man makes even nature smile.

There is one sad note, however, in the symphony, one dark spot in the canvas, one pathetic figure in the scene—woman. Except for the Somali girl, who is the most frolicsome and the least dressed, the veil, in every lugubrious texture and form, prevails. Also the *izar*, which is the veil of the woman's body—it conceals her figure. Some of them seemed to rebel against this hallowed horror of custom, this obscene expression of man's selfishness, by a graceful walk, which called attention to their hidden charm. Others actually flirted with their feet and hands.

The Arab woman walks with her shoulders, not too conspicuously, however, and thus, throwing out her arm, she reveals her hand. One hand I have seen, which made me forget for the nonce the procession and Hashem-Bahr. On the whole, the Muhammadan woman on festal days is a sorry figure, a pathetic figure, a figure that cries out against the tyranny and inhumanity, the ignorance and selfishness of the Muhammadan man. One juggler, who pretended to have gone mad with the love of Hashem-Bahr, ran amuck amid a group of women and started to tear off

their veils. Would that such madness might prevail all over Al-Islam !

The procession of the *mahmal*—the green silk cover for the tomb of the saint, set upon a canopy frame—moved through the main street towards the mosque, preceded by the tom-tom squad and the dancing dervishes. Immediately before the *mahmal*, in a circle of honour, was a solitary figure, a little man with a big turban and a big staff, strutting proudly, his head in the air, and his face expressing ineffable delight. He was the nephew of the saint.

The wonder-worker, tongue in cheek, is everywhere diverting the crowd. One Somali, who is preparing to knock his head against a stone wall, flirts for an hour with a patient audience, now sprinkling the wall with water, now covering his head with dust, now wildly leaping in the air, now rolling on the ground, but always keeping his head at a safe distance from the wall, and then, snatching a cigarette from one of the spectators, he sits down and enjoys a smoke. Others who get into ' the state,' who are, in other words, abstracted by Hashem-Bahr and are no longer responsible for their actions, are carried off above the shoulders of four men, so that every one might behold the miracle, and taken into the Mosque, where, immediately as they stand under the white dome, they are cured. One of these lunatics, a circus performer of ability, has two ox-tails tied to his girdle from behind, and with a bamboo stick, he is parrying the blows of a man swinging a heavy sword and rattling strings of tin cans, which hung from his shoulders and his waist. This exquisitely ludicrous performance stirs to laughter even a sombrely happy Arab crowd.

But the ' headliners ' of the show are the dagger men, who are dancing in a big circle in front of the Mosque. I had heard thrilling stories about them. They stab themselves, crying Hashem-Bahr ! and are immediately healed. They cut off their tongues and pluck out their eyes and go

THE MOSQUE OF HASHEM BAHR AT SHEIKH OTHMAN.

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into the Mosque, where, under the white dome, they are straightway restored. They throw themselves into the deep well from which they are pulled out alive and dry.

I have seen them perform and I was delighted and amazed. They are very dexterous, indeed, with the dagger, which in light, rapid strokes and movements, they make you believe is piercing their bodies. Sometimes, accidentally—I am quoting my companion—they draw blood. And the tongues which they cut off and the eyes which they pluck out with the dagger—alas for my sophisticated guide !—are tongues and eyes of sheep, which they carry concealed in their bosom and then quickly insert them in the proper place for the accomplishment of the miracle. I cannot testify to this. But I am morally certain that a slice of tongue was cut for my bewilderment, and an eye was plucked out ! The restoration, which took place inside the Mosque, is equally certain, for the man came out wagging the tongue to prove it.

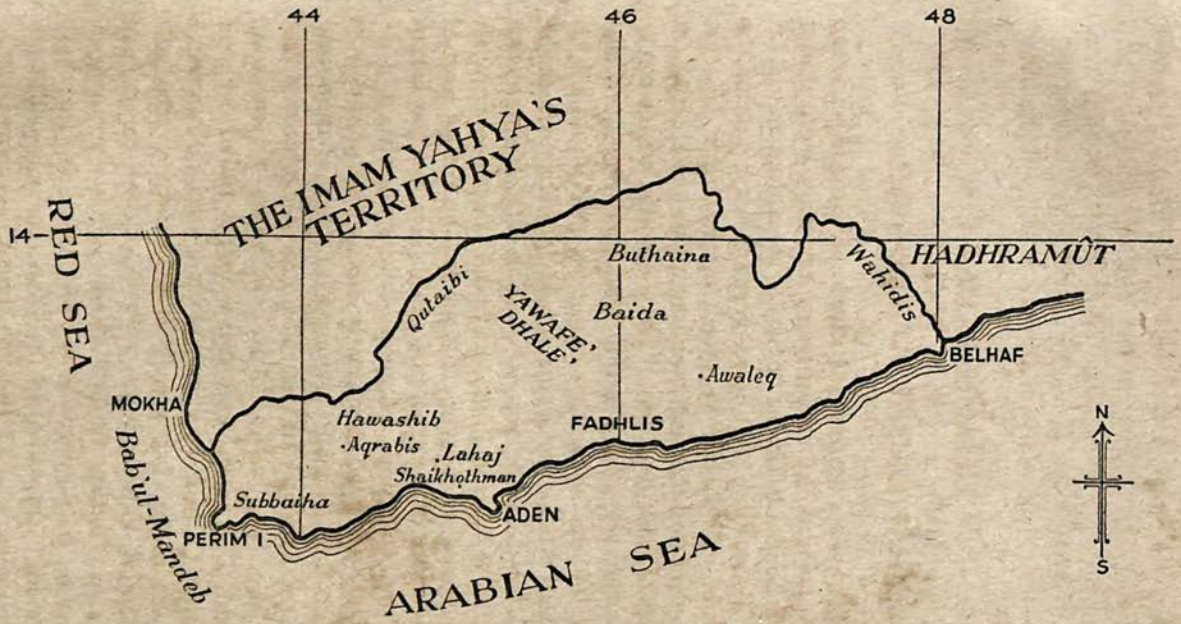
O Hashem-Bahr, thou art my benefactor for a day, and for many days to come, when I look back upon this scene of indescribable glamour, ineffable merriment, and supreme disorder. Spontaneity is the King of an Oriental fête and Chaos is his Prime Minister. Indeed, and he has need of no other official to keep the peace. The Hindu soldiers of the British Government, mounted on camels, add a flare to the picture, but are superfluous to the law ; and the Assistant Resident, who walks among the crowd and seems to be sharing its delight, must have been astonished less at the orderly disorder and the peaceful anarchy of caprice and taste, than at the want of imagination in one of his predecessors, who first refused Hashem-Bahr a permit to be buried in his own mosque. Now they come themselves, the Ingliz, to attend the festival of the youngest saint in Arabia, while Hashem-Bahr looks upon the dagger-performers and the many motor-cars parked under the tamarisks of Sheikh Othman, and smiles.

CHAPTER IV

LAHAJ IN THE WORLD WAR

WHEN the French commercial mission visited Al-Yaman in 1709, Aden and the surrounding territory were under the rule of the Zaidi Imam of San'a, who then made his capital at Mawahib ; but twenty years later, one of the Abdali chiefs of Lahaj revolted against the Imamic authority, declared his independence, and succeeded in establishing himself at Aden. That was the beginning of the Abdali dynasty, which lasted a hundred years. Meanwhile, Turkey was struggling again for a foothold in Al-Yaman ; and when the Egyptian troops of Ibrahim Pasha conquered Najd in the second decade of the nineteenth century and, ten years later, occupied Asir, the Dowlah declared her authority over all Arabia ; but in no part of Al-Yaman was it other than nominal. Neither the Imam of San'a nor the Sultan of Lahaj would recognize it.

Now, early in the nineteenth century England was scouring the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea for a coaling station on the route to India. The Isle of Perim was first occupied, but because of its lack of water it was soon abandoned. The Isle of Sokotra, which is called the gem of the Indian Ocean, was then chosen, and Commander Haines of the Indian Navy was commissioned to purchase it by the Indian Government, who sanctioned the sum of 10,000 Marie Theresa dollars (£1,000) for the purpose. But the less he paid, the Commander was told, the more credit he would derive. The Sultan, however, would not sell at any price. 'The English might take the Island,'

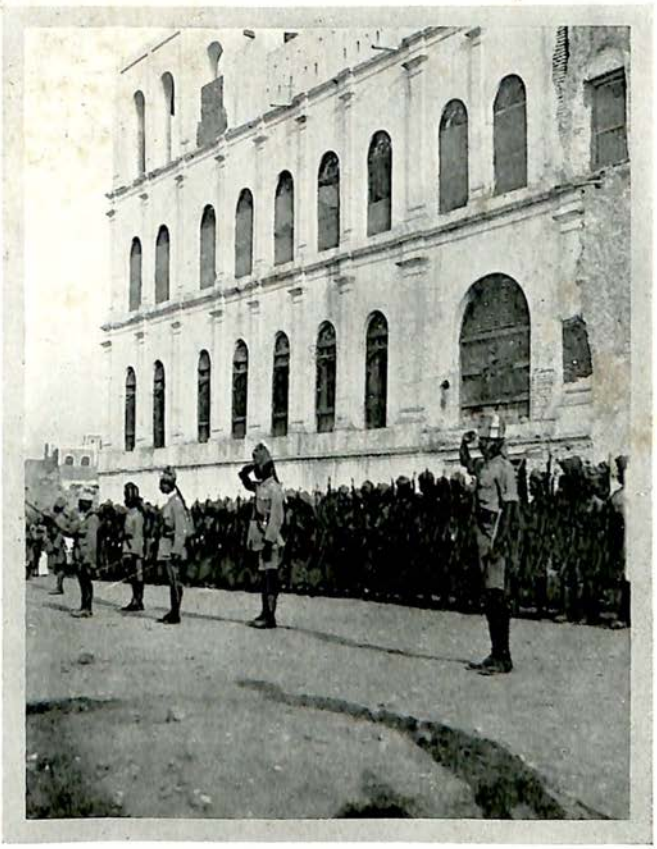


A Sketch Map of
ADEN
and the Protectorates

he said, 'but sell it I never will.' The English landed troops at Tamarida in spite of the Sultan's protest; but the occupation was disastrous. One of the flotillas was wrecked, its men were drowned, and fever afterwards decimated the troops. Sokotra was subsequently abandoned.

Meanwhile, they hovered around Aden, which was in fact their first choice; but the Arabs were not amenable. That did not matter. English colonial policy is based upon the geological conception of time. When a certain territory or a certain island is desired, the British Government allies itself with the conditions that surround it, keeps its eye upon the prevailing political phenomenon, and waits. After concluding a treaty of amity and commerce in 1802 with the Sultan Ahmad Ibn Abd'ul-Karim of Lahaj, which treaty was upheld for twenty-five years and then revoked by his son the Sultan Muhsin, the British Government turned towards Asir, where the Turko-Arab drama was being enacted. Ibrahim Pasha, son of Muhammad Ali, had his eyes upon Aden, the *Eye of Al-Yaman*; but Turkey no longer trusted Muhammad Ali, nor his son Ibrahim; they were getting too powerful and too ambitious; they should evacuate Arabia. Who is to force them, however, if they refuse to obey the orders of the Porte? Here was the opportunity for which the British Government was waiting—the moment when a political phenomenon presages an upheaval—what is called the psychological moment.

Lord Palmerston, who was then Prime Minister, succeeded in negotiating with the Sublime Porte a Treaty of Free Trade throughout the Ottoman Empire; he then obtained an *iradé* from the Sultan Abdul-Majid to use Aden as a principal trading station in Arabia; and having thus gotten his Government's fee in advance, he told Muhammad Ali in 1839 to withdraw his troops from Asir. His presence there threatened the integrity of the Ottoman Empire! The *iradé* was then transferred to the Govern-



THE REGULAR ARMY OF LAHAJ IN FRONT OF THE PALACE.

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ment of India for execution. It did not matter if the Sublime Porte had but a nominal sovereignty over Aden; the legality of the transaction was unquestionable. But there was also a pretext for an attack, which after several attempts to purchase Aden had failed, was inevitable; and on 16th January, 1839, therefore, the warships opened fire, and Sultan Muhsin with 700 Arabs, after a strong resistance, surrendered to the British. Ibrahim Pasha was then preparing to evacuate Asir, which he did the following year; and thus was the account liquidated between Downing Street and the Sublime Porte.

But the Sultan Muhsin, who withdrew from Aden, was not completely defeated; and together with the Hawashib Arabs, who became his allies, he continued to harass the British. Other tribes, unfriendly to the Abdalis and the Hawashib, saw an advantage in taking an interest in the conflict, and Commander Haines, from that time, following the advice of the Bombay Government, initiated the policy of divide-and-rule. This was followed, many years later, by the elastic formula discussed in a former chapter.

Meanwhile, a treaty was concluded between the Sultan Muhsin and the British Government, by virtue of which he received a yearly stipend for relinquishing all his rights to Aden. Other clauses in the treaty referred to the independence of the Sultanate of Lahaj, to the courts, the boundaries, and the right of the Sultan to grant titles and decorations! Later, as the political situation around Aden developed, became more complicated, the 'protection clause' was added. But this protection, when it was really needed, was seldom given; and when it was, it either came too late, or was not adequate. This was especially the case of Lahaj during the world war.

Near Bab'ul-Mandib and not far from the Yaman coast is the little island of Sheikh Sa'id, which was mentioned in the official reports of the war, and which is likely to be mentioned also in the petroleum reports of the world.

This little island, which is now within the territories of the Imam Yahya, was in the hands of the Turks during the war ; and when the commander of the Turkish forces in Al-Yaman decided to march upon Aden, the British Government ordered a transport of troops, coming from India to Suez, to be landed at that port, while on the 10th of November, 1914, its warships bombarded Sheikh Sa'id. The Turks withdrew before the troops that landed on the coast ; but they decided to stop there, after destroying a few forts, and consider it a victory. It was a victory in the sense of having had the effect of delaying seven months the march on Aden. The Turks then retook Sheikh Sa'id and moved from Mawia towards Lahaj.

There was not in all the Yaman more than fifteen thousand troops, a quarter of which only was available for the Aden expedition ; but the Commander Sa'id Pasha, a Circassian of ability and generous impulses, was much liked by the Arabs, many of whom joined his forces. The Hawashib opened their country to him ; but the Sultan of Lahaj remained faithful to his treaty with the British Government. Sa'id Pasha sent a despatch to Sultan Ali announcing that he is to pass through his territory on his way to Aden, and he guaranteed him the security of life and property if they meet with no opposition. Here was another little Belgium. But the Sultan of Lahaj could not muster a force sufficient for defence ; he therefore called upon the English at Aden for reinforcements—for the protection he was entitled to by treaty rights.

The reinforcements were promised and the defence of Lahaj was urged. A few thousand rifle-bearers, therefore, marched out to meet the Turks, and a battle was fought at Dukaim, twenty miles north of the capital, in which the Lahajites were defeated. Sa'id Pasha then advanced upon Lahaj, fired his cannons at the palaces of the ruling house, and on 5th July, 1915, he entered the capital in triumph. The Sultan and a few of his men held out in the palace until its walls began to crumble. It was at the

A CAMEL RACE AT SHEIKH OTHMAN.

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close of day when they took to flight, and no troops from Aden had yet arrived.

There is no doubt that the Turks moved quicker than the English. But the orders were given for the garrison of a few thousand mostly Indian troops to move to Sheikh Othman, and then to proceed to Lahaj. It seems, however, that the delay could not be avoided, and the official report gives three reasons for it; namely, the heat, the lack of water, and the desertion of the camel transport corps. There is a fourth—a mutiny among the Indian troops, who refused to fight against their brother Muslems. Nevertheless, a detachment marched out of Sheikh Othman the day Sa'id Pasha attacked Lahaj, but it did not reach the capital in time to be of any use. On the contrary, its delay was the cause of a tragedy, which might have been averted. It was dark when they were approaching Lahaj and when Sultan Ali and his men were fleeing from it. The troops thought that this was the vanguard of the enemy and they fired. The Lahajites protested and proved their identity, but it was too late. Already several of them had fallen dead, and the Sultan, who was wounded, died in Aden of his wound.

This detachment of British troops was defeated on the following day by the Turks, who advanced upon Sheikh Othman and occupied it, together with Umm'ul-U'mud and Al-Waht. Aden itself was in need of reinforcements, and when they arrived a fortnight later the British renewed on 20th July the attack upon the Turks, forcing them out of Sheikh Othman, and then, with the support of the tribesmen, out of Al-Waht and Umm'ul-'Umud. But they continued to hold Lahaj till the end of the war, and the English, in spite of the entreaties and the protests of the ruling family and the Lahajite refugees in Aden, made no attempt to force an evacuation.

Nor did the Turks make any further attempt to take Aden. Hostilities on either side ceased and the situation between these fragments of the Allies and the Central

Powers in this little corner of the world was amazing and amusing. That both were far removed from the seats of chief command, from their Governments, and from the horrors of the war, was partly responsible for the apathy that begetteth peace. Besides, the Turks were almost stranded in Al-Yaman, and Sa'id Pasha found in Lahaj a field to till and a garden to cultivate. As for the English, they were satisfied so long as Aden and Sheikh Othman were safe. Blessed are the contented, for they shall inherit no enmities. They may even become magnanimous.

Indeed, while the millstones were grinding the best seeds of humanity in the north of France and filling the earth with darkness and terror, the English and the Turks, in this blessed corner of Arabia Felix, were exchanging both words and deeds of kindness ; and to the Circassian Commander Sa'id Pasha belongs the credit of taking the initiative and maintaining the friendly relations. The English themselves testify to his nobility of character, and the Arabs, who never cease to praise him, still bemoan his days.

The belligerents really exchanged presents. Lahaj is an agricultural territory and Sa'id Pasha, soon after its occupation, set his soldiers to tilling and cultivating the soil. But Aden is as barren as a rock. The two Commanders therefore exchanged salaams, and then friendly words, and then—' Here are some vegetables and fruits,' said Sa'id Pasha. ' Thank you,' said the English, ' and here are a few sacks of sugar and rice. Here, too, are some cigarettes.' The Turkish troops were wild with joy. ' Long live the English ! ' they cried.

Thus was peace established between the Allies and the Central Powers, or between their representatives at Aden and Lahaj, three years before the end of the war ; and when the Armistice was declared, Sa'id Pasha came into Aden to surrender his sword to the English, who received him with every mark of courtesy and respect. The people gave him a great ovation. He entered Aden, not as one defeated, but as a conqueror.

CHAPTER V

CIVILIZATION AT LAHAJ

AT the Aden station we boarded a military train imported from India and run upon a narrow gauge to Lahaj. It consisted of one car for passengers, divided into two compartments, first and second class, with a narrow vestibule between them for servants, and five cattle and third-class cars. Its engine must have been as old as the discovery of steam ; its ration was certainly military ; and it never started or stopped without a triple jerk and a final crash. There was method even in its spasms ; it gave passengers sufficient warning to slowly step aboard, and sufficient time to wake up and descend.

The distance of twenty miles between Aden and the capital of Lahaj is covered in two hours, which is five times the speed of a camel ; and the Arabs who travel modern fashion between the two cities thus save eight hours of their valuable time, and praise Allah and the Ingliz. We first pass by the salt-pans, which betray a method of business unlike that of the railway ; and then through the main street of Sheikh Othman, whose groggeries and *ghat*-dens buzz with soldiers and Somalis and flies. There is in this village a public garden also, where the Government grows vegetables for the troops ; and in this garden is a Zoo, where two gazelles, three monkeys, a porcupine and several birds in a single cage, look all as happy as a rat in a trap.

After Sheikh Othman comes Dar'ul-Amir, which is at the border of the Sultanate of Lahaj ; but all we could see

of the *Abode of the Prince* was one solitary building—the Custom House. The mud and straw village must be behind it or beyond. The other mud villages, at which the train stops and takes a good rest, are Sobre, Jalajel and one with an unpronounceable name, from which we behold the palaces of Al-Houtah. Otherwise we pass through a desert waste, which is often swept by the scorching east wind, the simoom of the Vacant Quarter, and here and there is a stunted tamarisk half-covered with sand.

At the Lahaj station we were met by the heir-apparent, the Sultan's chamberlain, and the military commander. The latter, an imposing figure, tall and thin, greeted us in the name of His Highness and led us to the two motor-cars that were already chucking at the other side of the platform.

The costumes of these people reflected the rainbow, and the style was not that of Arabia. The military commander, who is the Sultan's brother, wore closely-fitting white trousers, a long coat, Stamboul-style, of light blue silk, barred and flowered, and a many-coloured sash, which he wound tightly round the waist, thus giving it a feminine line, and from which stood out the silver-incrusted hilts of two formidable daggers. His turban, which matched his sash in colour and material, was wound loosely in conical shape after the fashion of the dandies of Lahaj. But in this chromatic and sartorial splendour is an up-to-date Arab, as we shall see. His military step, his curt but gracious manner and his sharp accent mark him out, at first sight, as a man of character—and crotchets.

We rode through the principal street of Al-Houtah, which was lined on both sides with half-naked blacks, and into the Palace ground, stopping in front of the door, where we were met by His Highness the Sultan, his Prime Minister and others of his court. After a brief salaam we walked up the stone stairs to the first floor, which is the reception hall, one side of which is furnished in the Oriental, the other in the European, fashion. On the

SULTAN ABD'UL-KARIM FADHL, SULTAN OF LAHAJ.

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European side, whose furniture, however, is made in India, is a phonograph ; on the Oriental side are diwans, covered with white linen, and furnished with leaning pillows encased in barred cloth of yellow and red. The floor is covered with costly rugs ; the windows are fitted with coloured glass and are hung with embroidered cream curtains, thus admitting but a dim and mellow light and imparting to the hall the atmosphere of a mosque ; while in the centre is a table on which are the heavy tomes of that most formidable—and most popular—of Muslem Commentators, Al-Bukhari.[1]

The Sultan Abd'ul-Karim is of slight build, thin in the face, with an Abd'ul-Hamid nose, a pointed black beard, and princely Arab hands. But there is not the Arab spark in his eyes, and he is rather morose and taciturn. He wore over his European trousers the Lahaj cloth, which was of red and yellow silk with tassels that fell below the knee ; also a Stambouline coat of black worsted, over which, jauntily thrown on his shoulders, was a brown *aba* of Persian weave. Here are the fashions of three nations, India, Europe and Arabia, curiously put together.

Because the American Consul at Aden was with us, we were first received officially on the European side of the reception hall. I introduced Mr. Cross and my travelling companion Capt. Yanni.

'The former American Consul,' said His Highness, 'used to visit us, and we liked and esteemed him. We welcome you as we have often welcomed him.'

I translated these words, to which the Consul replied with a word of thanks and was silent. He wanted me, evidently, to do the talking ; but while I was setting forth the purposes of my travels in Arabia, I was interrupted

[1] This is a triple Commentary, in six volumes, on the Traditions and Sayings of the Prophet ; and its full title is as follows : *Al-Qastalani on Al-Bukhari, Al-Khazraji on Al-Qastalani, and Al-Imam An-Nawawi on Al-Khazraji.* In the month of Rajab, which is one of the three blessed months, the others being Sha'ban and Ramadhan, the Muslems everywhere in the world read in Al-Bukhari from two to four hours a day as a spiritual exercise.

happily by the Prime Minister Saiyed 'Alawi'l-Jafri, who has a smile and a twinkle in his eye, which are assuring, which are very pleasing. The interruption, however, was brief; for he, too, like a true diplomat, said his word and was silent.

'We know of your purposes, O esteemed one, and they are all noble.'

Sultan Abd'ul-Karim then asked about the health of King Husein, and Capt. Yanni replied in unmistakable words: 'His Majesty is never ill, except when he sees an Englishman.' The Sultan turned to Mr. Cross, wishing, I think, to change the subject. 'You must overlook our shortcomings, O esteemed Consul. We have nothing that is worthy of you, nor anything to ennoble us in the eyes of the great American nation but our esteem and our sincerity.'

Consul Cross surprised me with his reply, which left no margin this time for silence,—'I shall convey the words of Your Highness to my Government; and I wish to say that personally I believe the Arabs have many virtues to ennoble them in the eyes of the Western nations.'

This even afforded me a sense of relief; for I was afraid that by his silence or any word he might say he would make my position as interpreter rather ticklish. He proved his quality, which on a week's acquaintance I realized was uncommon. But like the most of true Americans his deed is often better than his word.

After coffee was served, the Sultan rose and walked ahead of us to the Oriental side of the reception hall. 'You are now at your home, and you may wish to rest.' Saying which he walked into the Palace, followed by his suite. That the three of us were eager to express what had crystallized into a positive impression was evident from the fact that we all almost spoke at once.

'An Arab Sultan in Indian clothes,' I said.

'A Sultan of few words—a wise one,' said Capt. Yanni.

'A civilized Sultan,' said Consul Cross.

Of a truth, he is ; even if civilization only consisted in having a motor-car, a phonograph, a billiard table, clean linen, and a good cook. But on the table, beside Al-Bukhari, were the Cairo magazines, which are read in earnest from cover to cover. The Sultan also takes an active interest in his farms, has a good stud, and only one wife. He also has a regular army of 300 khaki-clad soldiers and a military band of which he and his subjects are very proud.

His brother the commanding officer, who is also the band-master, gave us a great surprise ; for soon after we were left alone, the strains of Yankee Doodle greeted our ears. He had the band play, in honour of Mr. Cross, what he thought was the national anthem of America. Another surprise in the Palace was the large billiard room adjoining the reception hall ; and I later discovered that to beat Consul Cross at a game of English pool were better for the soul than listening, even eight thousand miles from Yankeeland, to Yankee Doodle.

But the Sultan's subjects (30,000, of whom 12,000 are in Al-Houtah) do not like, or cannot afford, civilization. They live mostly in mud and straw huts, and they refuse to wear clothes. In the capital, besides the palaces of the ruling house, which are built of stone, two or three stories high, and are akin in style to the architecture of San'a, there are houses of brick and of rough stone covered with plaster.

The population is mostly black, but not negroid ; nor is it of mixed strains. The Arabs of the Lower Yaman, particularly around Aden and along the southern coast of the peninsula, are as swarthy as the Africans ; and there are two kinds in Lahaj, the native and the Hujri. The former is a shade lighter than the latter, who is from a district in Hadhramout north of Makalla. The Hujris or as they are called the Hujour (Ar. pl.) are of an imposing physique, most of them giants, and unusually energetic. They do the work on the farms and in the towns ; and

when they walk the streets sporting their daggers, they look formidable.

Both the Lahji and the Hujri soak their turbans and their bodies in indigo blue. The process of dying themselves is as follows : they take a couple of yards of sheeting, dip them in the indigo, wrap themselves in them as in a shroud over night, and then use them as a turban. Their other article of apparel is the loin cloth. A few wear sandals, and they all carry the Lahaj dagger, which is mistaken by the stranger for a brace of weapons. The silver-incrusted sheath is in the shape of a U, at either end of which is a hilt ; but which is ' practicable ' and which is but ' property,' only the owner knows. These daggers are particularly effective as they shine against their naked breasts—silver filigree against a blue background ; and they are compelling, awe-inspiring in their single undivided authority. But the Lahji does not look as ferocious as the Hujri. His features partake of those of the Arabs of the highland.

The better class of Lahjis wear jackets and the *foutah* or coloured loin cloth, which comes down to the knee, and which makes them look like the Scotch highlander in kilts. Some of them also shave their moustaches and cultivate a fringe of hair around their cheeks or chins like the people of Al-Yaman, but none use the dye upon their clothes or their bodies.

A few of these people, cousins of the Sultan, came on the afternoon of the following day to the *ghat*-party at the Palace. But they had really come to see us, and the curiosity was mutual. One of them, the eldest, the Nestor, I presume, of the tribe, exchanged with His Highness kisses on the hand ; the others kissed the royal hand and were kissed on the cheeks in return. After Nestor had laid his sword, at the hilt of which was attached his tobacco pouch, on the table, he sat down in a deliberate manner, folded one of his legs under him on the diwan, and then looked at us and nodded his salaam. I tried to engage him in

conversation ; but I only succeeded in cajoling out of his lips a few monosyllables, which he uttered in a grave undertone.

Everyone of these people carried his tobacco pouch with him and was accompanied by a slave to prepare for him a *mada'ah*, which was furnished by the Sultan. This is the custom in Lahaj ; but in the Upper Yaman people carry their *mada'ahs* as well as their tobacco with them when they go visiting. Nestor's slave, who wore a brilliant-coloured cloth around his loins, a turban similar to that of his master, and walked with a mincing step, was the first to come, carrying that tall and slender instrument of *keif* in one hand and a chalice-like gilded receptacle in the other. His fellow slaves, six of them, followed in a line and were similarly laden. A *mada'ah* and a cuspidor were placed before each guest. The slaves disappeared and reappeared, each carrying a jug of water, which he placed near his master. Royal cousins in a row on the diwan, according to their rank and age ; before them a row of gilded bowls and jugs ; and a few yards away, the *mada'ahs* in a line, each ministering to her master through a long tube encased in white lace—this is the prelude to the *ghat*. They all puff away in silence for a few minutes, and then the Sultan claps for his slaves, two of whom appear in the door.

'Bring the *ghat*.'

Immediately they return carrying armfuls of the precious herb, which they place before His Highness, who opens the bundles, examines them, and begins to distribute them to his guests. The Ghat Club of Silence holds its afternoon session. And Nestor, the most disdainful Arab chief I have ever met, would cast, every now and then, a sidelong glance, at me especially, and take up the cuspidor before him and spit. This gesture was not, however, without grace. The other gesture when he twirled the twig, after picking the leaves, and threw it in an amused self-satisfied manner on the floor and in my direction, was

sublime. I waited patiently and in vain for the first effect of *ghat*—talkativeness. But the Ghat Club met and dispersed in silence; and the barbarian cousin, who was indeed fascinating, took a last look at me when he last took up the gilded cuspidor.

Lahaj, I have said, is an agricultural district lying in the bifurcation of Wadi Duban and watered by its two streams; but it would have been much more fertile if the method of cultivation was not still pre-Biblical. Although its Sultans have always taken an active interest in farming and gardening, and although tractors can be used at little cost and artesian wells may be bored, the plough and the spade have not changed since the days of the ancient Sabeans. But the change is certain to come. Sultan Abd'ul-Karim, who has permitted civilization into his Palace, will not bar it out of his farm. He took us through it one morning and introduced us to some of his trees. The mango and the papaya he had imported from India; but they were not as flourishing as some I had seen in Yucatan. The orange and the banana seemed more at home. Even trees from the temperate zone, like the apple and the pear, find a welcome soil in Lahaj. Like his Palace, his gardens bring East and West in a neighbourliness together.

Besides the fruit trees there was a variety of native shrubbery which he pointed out by name; and the gentleman who was with us, Ameer Saleh of Dar'ul-Ameer, apparently a poet, certainly a reader of poetry, was always ready with his quotation.

'Here is the *salam* (a species of acacia),' says His Highness.

And the Ameer Saleh: 'Which is mentioned by the poet who says:

> 'Thoughts of my neighbours in the *salam* grove
> Bring to my eyes and heart the tears of love.'

But the poet and philosopher of Lahaj is none else than the commanding officer and band-master and Beau Brummel we have already met. Indeed, the ruling

A DERVISH DANCING AT THE FETE OF HASHEM BAHR AT SHEIKH OTHMAN.

THE LAHAJ MILITARY BAND.

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Sultan's brother, Sultan Ahmad (he and the heir-apparent are also called Sultans),[1] is a man of parts. But his talents are not as conspicuous as his frock-coats of barred and flowered silk. He wore one of different colour every time he came to see us ; and he never came without bringing with him some flowers.

The discussions were not always, however, in harmony with the make-up ; for the Sultan Ahmad is a didactic poet, more of a philosopher and moralist than a bard of the old school of *The-Arrow-of-her-Eye-has-Struck-my-Heart.*

He suffered (in spite of the civilization of Lahaj) from the barbarism of his surroundings, and mostly from the dour fanaticism of the various Islamic sects. 'Sectarianism,' he said, 'is the calamity of nations, East and West.... If the Arabs were sensible, they would know that their salvation must come from here, and not from here.' He pointed first to his head and then to his heart. 'Of a certainty, the rule of the intellect is better than the rule of the emotions. You know what our great poet Abu'l-Ala says.... Intellect is the light of truth, and truth is the basis of everything that is good and permanent, in religion or in politics. But the heart is often erring, and too often are the emotions misleading. There is the Zaidi who soaks his clothes and his body in indigo, because he thinks that indigo keeps him warm. A wrong thought becomes in the practice a belief ; belief fed by illusion becomes a superstition ; and superstitions make men cruel to themselves and others. I have tried the dye when I was young, but it did not keep me warm. Now, if we put everything to the proof—if we make reason our guide, as Abd'l-Ala says—many of our beliefs would turn out to be like indigo. Their virtue is solely in the imagination.... I was told that some of the Zaidis dye their clothes and their bodies in

[1] I discovered another Sultan before leaving Lahaj. It seems that every one of the ruling house, with a political ambition and a will to make it felt, at least, is given this title. It was originally the way the Yaman Arabs showed their contempt for the Turks and subsequently for each other. You are a Sultan, I am Sultan, he is a Sultan, we are all Sultans.

mourning for Husain. They still mourn Husain! We should mourn the intellect in our land; we should mourn science and education.'

Sultan Ahmad mourns in his heart, and not in his clothes. 'A man should always be, at least in the appearance, like a fresh sweet-scented flower to his fellow men. Colour and perfume and music are as essential to life as prayer. . . . European clothes? I have no hesitation in wearing them, if they are more convenient. The real value of a man is not in what you see on his body, although this should be pleasing, as I said—pleasing to the eye. But the turban and the dagger are worth nothing, if there is no knowledge, no wisdom, no sincerity within.'

There is at Lahaj a public school; but in Aden there are but a few private schools, where Arabic is of secondary importance. The English authorities take little or no interest in public education. The Protectorates are only essential to them as a protecting power, and nothing, in this connection, is of real importance except from the political and the military points of view. They have an army officer at Lahaj to supervise the regular force; and anything that is likely to titivate the vanity of their Sultan-friends rarely escapes them. In the history of their relations with Lahaj [1] is the following: 'On January 19, 1895, Government decreed that the salute of nine guns to the Sultan of Lahaj be increased to eleven. . . . and in 1903, His Highness was made Knight Commander of the Indian Empire.' [2] As interesting also is the way they address in Arabic their communications. To the Prop of Eminent Ameers and the Model of Brilliant Worthies, His Highness the Sultan, our Beloved Friend Sir Abd'ul-Karim ibn Ali Al-Abdali, K.C.I.E. But in their English communications they refer to him as His Highness the Abdali Sultan.

[1] *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, vol. xiii., Arabia (Calcutta 1909).

[2] One of the two most popular Orders of British India, the other being the Order of the Star of India.

The Sultan returns the compliment, Prop of Eminent Ameers, etc., when he is addressing the Resident.

Before the Turks and the British came, the Arabs knew nothing and cared nothing about titles and decorations. Even to-day, in inland Arabia, especially, they address their Sheikh or Ameer by his name direct, or they refer to him as the Long-of-Days. In Lahaj they call the Sultan 'the Ruling Father.' Highness is never used; and when he visits his farms and gardens, the labourers do not come to kiss his hand. They salaam from where they are and continue at work.

One day, when we rode out to the end of the railway line, six miles beyond Al-Houtah, His Highness, praising the Lahaj farmer, said, 'He only stops to eat and to pray.' It was about sunset, and his words were proven there and then. People in the fields turned their faces towards the north, towards Mecca, and began their genuflections. Even on the top of the water tank at the rail-head, the Hujri who was repairing it stopped to say his sunset prayer. He was a noble and inspiring figure, above that scaffolding, genuflecting and kissing the iron floor under his feet. This is real religion; this is Al-Islam.

But when I went back to the Palace that day I opened a volume of Al-Bukhari at random, and the subject was the toothpick. A dozen pages devoted to the toothpick! and the sayings of the Prophet on the use of the toothpick, and the comments of the commentators upon the sayings of the Prophet on the use of the toothpick. I closed the volume, and taking up another, I opened it also at random. It was 'Āishah this time, the babbling 'Āishah, telling about the Prophet's habit and manner of washing when he cohabited with more than one of his wives on a single night.[1] A page

[1] Every saying attributed to the Prophet must be proven through its various reporters, the chain of So-and-so-told-me-that-So-and-so-told-him sometimes occupying a whole page. Thus the libidinous gossiping wife reports a saying of the Prophet to Sheikh So-and-so, who tells it to Saiyed So-and-so, who relates it to the Imam So-and-so, who repeats it to the Commentator So-and-so, who is the immediate source and authority of

from the Arabian Nights! Even the Shahrazades of French Memoirs cannot hold a candle to 'Ā'ishah.

I told Sultan Ahmad, when he came to see us that evening, about my luck with Al-Bukhari. 'To have better luck,' he said, 'you have to read it all as we do in the month of Rajab. Al-Bukhari is like a case of glass ware that comes from Europe; a big case, very big, with only twelve glasses or six lamps in it all wrapped and buried in a heap of straw—that is Al-Bukhari, the grace of Allah enfold him.'

Al-Bukhari. Sometimes a link in the chain is weak or false. Hence the comments of a second Commentator upon the first. Sometimes the objection to a witness—a weak or false link—is not well taken. Hence the commentaries upon the commentaries of the second Commentator!

CHAPTER VI

THE PROTECTORATES

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Sultan of Oman was the first to adopt the open-door policy in Arabia. He made treaties of amity and commerce with England, France, the United States of America,[1] and the Hanseatic Republics of Lübeck, Bremen and Hamburg; and these western nations were all treated on equal footing with uncommon generosity. 'Every one,' the clause runs, 'shall have all the privileges which are or may be conceded by the respective Governments to the subjects of the most favoured nations.'

But the treaties between the British Government and the ruling Ameers and Sultans around Aden, as well as along the Persian Gulf, are decidedly against the policy of the open door. They did not begin, however, in this spirit; for, on the whole, English foreign policy is an organic development subject, like other organic bodies, to the law of evolution. The first treaty[2] was a simple agreement and very brief. 'We are now friends,' it says, 'and promise peace and friendship, great and lasting friendship, and our hearts and wishes are one.' In this Oriental exaggeration, to which the British subscribed in the early days of their occupation, is the first drop of the liquid

[1] This treaty of amity and commerce between the U.S. of A. and His Majesty 'Seyud Sueed' (Sa'id ?) the Sultan of Maskat, concluded in the city of Maskat, Kingdom of Oman, on the 21st of September, 1833, was signed by Edmund Roberts, 'a citizen of the U.S. of A. and resident of Portsmouth, N.H., duly appointed a Special Agent by Letters Patent under the signature of the President.'

[2] This was concluded between the English and the Huzzabi tribe in 1839.

formula of the Colonial Office. Similar agreements were made in 1839 with the Sheikhs of the lower Yawafe', the Hawashib, and others; but gradually, as the various stages of friendship, stipends, and control are attained, that simple agreement becomes a regular treaty, the principal clause of which is a marriage bond based upon the Christian, and not the Islamic, idea. The Arab is tied up with Great Britain exclusively and forever.

> 'By this treaty he undertakes, in return for a subsidy, to alienate no part of his territory except to the British, to conform to British policy, and to accept no help, pecuniary or other, from any foreign power.' [1]

And in consideration of the above,

> 'the British Government agrees to pay to So-and-so and his successors the monthly sum of . . .' [2]

This often makes it unnecessary to use force to insure a strict observance of the treaty. Suspend the stipend. And this suspension has invariably proved to be the best means of getting the Chief or the Sultan to do the will of the British Government. In some instances, the ancient custom (now practised by the Imam Yahya) of holding hostages of peace and good behaviour was also resorted to by the authorities at Aden.

But there was still the contingency of a strong man rising among the tribes and forcing his fellow Arabs to *his* will. Follow me and I'll make you the lords of Aden. This is a magic word, which more than once had a certain unpleasant effect. The English must therefore contrive against it. Our friends and stipendiaries should also be protected. That some of them, the weaker tribes, did need

[1] In Trucial Oman also the five independent Sheikhs agree not to enter into correspondence or agreement with any power other than the British Government, nor to permit the Agent of any other Government to reside within their territories.

[2] The annual stipends paid to the Chiefs at the beginning, that is after the occupation of Aden, did not exceed $100. It varied from $60 to $100. But it has since then been raised to a $1,000 or more. The Sultan of Lahaj, who is the biggest stipendiary, gets 3,000 rupees ($1,000) a month. See List at the end of this volume.

THE MARKET PLACE, LAHAJ.

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protection against the stronger was manifest; but there is nothing easier than precipitating a fight between two neighbouring tribes. Levy a tax upon the camels of your neighbours that come into your territory; cut off the water-supply; start a raiding expedition—and the wronged or the weak party will inevitably appeal to Aden for help. Another pretext for a fight is when a protected Sultan, angry at the British for a fancied slight, or because of their refusal to increase his stipend, knocks down a boundary pillar. The neighbouring Sultan, to strengthen his position with the Residency, sets up the pillar again, and the fighting begins. Thus the Arabs themselves began to feel the necessity of a protective clause; but they did not all readily accept it.[1]

In process of time, however, the fourth evolutionary stage was reached, and the British Government became the ally, the friend AND PROTECTOR of the various Sultans and Chiefs—the guarantor of their independence. Which also means, of course, that you shall not club against us. Besides all these measures, there is another means of strengthening their influence in the various states and keeping the ruler and his leaders under their thumb. In one of the official reports I find the following: 'So-and-so owed his accession to our influence and has been supported by us against other claimants of his house.' This is a variation of the method of keeping the peace and safeguarding Aden.

The Sultanates and Ameerates that have accepted the gold, the friendship and the protection of Great Britain and have thus become the guardians of Aden, occupy the south-western coast of Arabia from Bab'ul-Mandib to Balhaf; and they are, besides Lahaj, as follows:

THE SUBBAIHAS

Take Aden as a central point. That strip of coast west of it, from Ras 'Umran to Bab'ul-Mandib is the land of the

[1] The Yawafe', for instance, whose treaty of amity was concluded in 1839, did not become a protectorate till sixty-five years later.

Subbaihas, who have a reputation for courage and treachery and freebooting. They count about 30,000 souls and are divided into clans, of whom are the 'Utaifi and the Buraimi, and each clan is ruled by its own chief. No man has yet risen among them to unite their evil power. The chiefs and the *'akels* (sub-chiefs) receive no stipulated subsidies. But they come down to Aden every three months and collect what they can. Some of them receive their bakshish through the Sultan of Lahaj.

THE FADHLIS

North-east of Aden, along a coast line of about a hundred miles, extending from the boundaries of Lahaj at Umm'ul-'Umud to that of the 'Awaleq at Muqaten, is the territory of Aal Fadhl, or the Fadhlis, who are very powerful and warlike. The Sultans of Lahaj used to pay subsidies to some of their neighbouring tribes, among them the Fadhlis ; and these payments have been continued by the British Government since 1839. The present ruler Sultan Abd'ul-Qader ibn Husain Aal Fadhl receives 400 rupees a month and is entitled to a salute of nine guns when he visits Aden. The Fadhli population is about 40,000.

THE 'AWALEQ

are the neighbours of the Fadhlis along the coast, and their territory, about a hundred miles east and seventy north, is the largest in the area of the Protectorates, and is divided into two sections, the upper and the lower. The Upper 'Awaleq is also divided politically ; one part is ruled by Sultan Saleh ibn Abdullah, who makes his capital at Ansab ; another part by a Chief who resides at Yashboum ; while 'Irqah and the coast town Howrah are also independent of each other, as well as of Yashboum and Ansab. But they all entered, in 1903, into a treaty of friendship with the English.

The treaty with the Lower 'Awaleq was concluded in 1855, and in it the Sultan bound himself to prohibit the

importation of slaves into his country; which part of the agreement was seldom observed, however, or enforced. In 1888, 33 years after the pact of friendship, the Lower 'Awaleq became a protectorate. Its people, about forty thousand, are the most primitive of the tribes; they have no religion whatsoever, I was told, and no morals. I asked at the Residency if I could travel in their country. 'Yes,' was the reply, 'if you don't care for your life.' The present ruler Sultan Abu-Bakr ibn Nasr receives a stipend, but no salute of guns.

THE WĀHIDIS

are the neighbours of the 'Awaleq north by east. Their capital is Haban with its seaport Balhaf, and their Sultan Ali ibn Muhsin, like his contemporary and neighbour, gets a stipend, but is not honoured when he goes to Aden with 'the salaam of the cannons.' The reason being that his Bedu do not like the English and have several times tried to break the protective noose. It is curious that while Balhaf and Yashboum in this part of Al-Yaman are centres of piety and learning, only fifty miles away from them, in the Lower 'Awaleq, are tribes who have not even heard of the Prophet Muhammad.

THE 'AWAZEL

Returning west from the Wāhidi country and crossing the land of the 'Awaleq along the 14th parallel, we reach Duthainah the home of the 'Awazel Bedu, which is situated at the convergence of three Wadis, Ruqouh, Zura and Mirwan, and which is noted for the fertility of its soil and the bravery of its men. Duthainah was in the past the centre of rebellion; its people refused the friendship of the English and more than once defeated the British soldiers that came up from Aden to force friendship upon them; but they finally surrendered. They could not remain the enemies, while their neighbours the 'Awaleq were the friends, of Government.

THE YAWAFE'

Continuing along the 14th parallel, we cross Wadi Ruqouh, passing by the southern end of the Baidha hills, a fertile country with flowing streams, whose people are friendly to Aden, we come to the land of the Yawafe', which, like the 'Awaleq, has more than one ruler and more than one political faith. The Lower Yawafe' has been friendly to the British, without interruption, ever since 1839; and in 1895 it became a protectorate. But its Sultan Muhsin ibn Ali is dissatisfied with the powers that be at Aden, because they do not listen to his demands. He wants his stipend increased; he wants a higher official rank (a title and decoration); and he wants a salute of guns like his contemporaries and neighbours.

But the Sultan of the Upper Yawafe', Fadhl ibn Muhammad, whose capital is the namesake of that of Lahaj, *i.e.*. Al-Houtah, desires nothing from the English but that they keep away from him. Like the Abdalis of Lahaj, these Yawafe' are among the most civilized of the hinterland tribes. There are rich merchants among them, who trade with India and Java; and they boast that no European ever crossed their frontier. But the boundary pillar between them and their lower tribesmen had to be respected; and so Aden entered into a treaty of friendship with the Sheikh of a sub-tribe by which he undertook to look after the said pillar for a monthly stipend of $7.00. The population of the Upper and the Lower Yawafe' is about 70,000.

THE ALAWIS

are of the recalcitrant tribes, and not until 1895 could Aden establish any treaty relations with them. But their Chiefs received nevertheless monthly stipends through their western neighbour the Sultan of the Hawashib. In 1895 a treaty was concluded; but whether it is of 'friendship' or of 'protection' or of both, is of little or no effect. The Alawis are elusive. So, too, are

SULTAN ABD'UL-KARIM FADHL.
In his Arabian and European dress.

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THE QOTAIBIS

who are also freebooters. They have a habit of raiding their neighbours, as the Subbaihas do, and of holding up the caravans. In 1860 they entered into treaty relations with Great Britain, but they accepted only her money and her friendship. Protection they did not need. Their Chief Muhammad Saleh el-Akhram fought against the soldiers of the Imam Yahya when they marched in 1921 upon the Protectorates. He afterwards made peace with the Imam, because Aden did not send him more money and more guns. The relations between the Qotaibis and the Alawis have never been good.

THE HAWASHIB

are the neighbours of both the Qotaibis and the Subbaihas, as well as of Lahaj. They were the first to befriend the English, but more than once they betrayed them, as when they joined the forces of Sa'id Pasha in his march upon Aden. The present Sultan of the Hawashib is Muhsin ibn 'Ali ibn Mane', whom we met in Musaimir on our way to San'a. It is said that they can muster twenty thousand rifles ; but it is more correct to say that this number is that of the population.

THE 'AQRABIS

Before we proceed to the northernmost part of the Protectorates, I must introduce to the reader the oldest Sultanate and the smallest, that of the 'Aqrabis, who are a subdivision of the Abdalis. They declared their independence about the same time as the United States of America, and, like those States, they are still free and independent. But they have not gained or lost in population or in territory ; they remain a single tribe, in a single city, under the rule of a single Sheikh. At Bir Ahmad, which is their capital and all their Kingdom, between Aden and Lahaj and the Subbaihas, the 'Aqrabis hold their own and are content with their lot.

DHALE'

is on the road to San'a, north-west of the Alawis, and is about seventy miles from the coast. It is a collection of tribes ruled by an Ameer, but in 1921 it was conquered by the Zioud, and its last Ameer, Nasr ibn Shayef, took refuge in Lahaj, where we met him. The ancestors of the present Chiefs of Dhale' are said to be *muwalladin*, or half-caste slaves of the Imams of San'a ; and they declared at the beginning of the last century their independence, which they maintained a hundred years. The soldiers of the Imam have also occupied the territory of the Qotaibis and the Baidha hills, where his authority is now paramount. And his policy is not unlike that of the power he has replaced : friendship—stipends—protection. Whether he is copying Aden or Aden copying him I cannot say.

Sheikh Muhammad al-Akhram, we have seen, was the first to change his bank account—the first customer of the British whom the Zioud won to their side. Why, when he came to surrender at Dhale', they even gave him a salute of four guns. The enemies of the Imam say that the Zioud made old Akhram pay afterwards for the powder. But this is neither here nor there. The outstanding fact is that the Imam Yahya is pursuing in the Protectorates, throughout which the Imamic propaganda is spreading, the same policy as the British at Aden. And they are our fellow-countrymen whom we would befriend, and finance, and protect, and honour with a salute of guns. Aye, we have guns too, ye British, both for making war and making salaam. And instead of titles and decorations, we offer our friends and stipendiaries what is more precious—and practical—we make them presents of coffee and *ghat*.

THE END

A LIST OF THE MONTHLY STIPENDS AND THE FIGHTING POWER OF EACH PROTECTORATE

		Fighting Power. Soldiers	Monthly Stipends. Rupees
Sultan Abd'ul-Karim Fadhl, Sultan of Lahaj		2,000	3,280
Sultan Abd'ul-Qader ibn Husein the Fadhli		1,000	360
Sultan Saleh ibn Abdullah	Upper 'Awaleq	3,000	250
Sheikh Muhsin ibn Farid	Upper 'Awaleq		250
Sheikh Muhsin ibn Ruwais	Upper 'Awaleq		150
Sultan Abu-Bakr ibn Naser, Sultan of Lower 'Awaleq		1,000	160
Sultan Muhsin ibn Ali			200
Sultan Saleh ibn Omar	The Yawafe'	3,000	80
Sheikh Saleh ibn Saleh	The Yawafe'		80
Sheikh Abu-Bakr Ali	The Yawafe'		100
Sheikh Muhammad Ali Muhsin	The Yawafe'		50
Sheikh Abd'ur-Rahman el-Maflahi	The Yawafe'		80
Sultan Muhsin ibn Ali, Sultan of the Hawashib		1,000	400
Ameer Nasr ibn Shayef, Ameer of Dhale'		1,000	300
Sheikh Muhammad Saleh el-Akhram, Sheikh of the Qotaibis		500	100
Sheikh Abd'un-Nabi, Sheikh of the Alawis		500	100
		13,000	5,940

In addition to the stipend, the stipendiary receives an honorarium every six months or every year, ranging from 300 to 1,000 rupees ; and there are other Sheikhs, learned men and political leaders, who receive money and presents from Aden.

Sultan 'Awad ibn Omar el-Qo'aiti, Sultan of Makalla, Hadhramout, has a standing army of 2,000 ; but the Qo'aitis of Hadhramout and India are people of considerable wealth. The stipend of their Sultan is therefore nominal—60 rupees a month.

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